FANAR

Qatar Islamic Cultural Center

مركز قطر الثقافي الإسلامي

Islamic knowledge week II

Course in Aqeedah

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Pure Faith leads to salvation

Everyone has a belief, but is it the true belief that His Lord wants him to believe?

Tell me not "You believe" but tell me, what is your belief?

If your belief is pure from polytheism and innovation, then you'll be saved.

But if your belief is inconsistent with the belief of Abraham, Noah, Moses…ETC, then you will not be saved. For a false belief does not lead to Paradise but to perish.

Abraham worshiped One God who has no son. He worshiped Him directly without mediators between.

Don't say to me, 'I was brought up on this faith with my family, so I must maintain it till I die'. But let me remind you that Abraham was brought up in a pagan family, nevertheless, he did not say, 'since my family are pagans I have to be like them.' But he criticized their beliefs and destroyed their Idols.

Can anyone else create these things other than the Creator?

How come that people seek salvation from those who are not creators.

If God does not offer me these three things then this would be a proof that he is the wrong god, and therefore there is no need to worship him.

Since Allah is My Only Creator, then He must be to me My Only Savior of whom I supplicate, pray to Him for my salvation in this world and the one to come.

Jesus (Peace be with him) worshiped God, hoping His mercy, fearing His punishment.

All the Prophets used to be the way Allah described them:

> "***They used to hasten to good deeds, and supplicate Us in hope and fear, and they were to Us humbly submissive.***" (21:90).

True Faith and False Religion

There are many religions in the world, each of which has its followers. Some of them account for hundreds of millions of people, but numbers cannot be an indication of truth. There are millions of Buddhists in the world, but it is an idolatrous religion. Likewise, the Hindus number in millions, but they too are idolaters. Many of the world's religions have similarities .

There are also differences between them. They all agree that Allah created the heavens and the earth, that He provides for His creatures and actively directs events in the world. But you can realize the difference when you observe the details of each one's faith, and the ways it manifests itself.

There are monotheists who only worship Allah and call upon none but Him, not upon idols, nor false gods, nor saints. And there are polytheists who believe in Allah but fail to worship Him alone purely, without mixing Him up with invented deities and idols. Allah said,

> **"*And most of them believe not in Allah except while they associate others* (with Him)."** (12:106)

There is no doubt that among the world's religions there is one that is acceptable to Allah for His worshippers, a religion other than which He will not accept, and the followers of which alone will find their good works and worship accepted through this religion that He has accepted. Allah guides whomever He pleases to His religion from among those whom He knows to be good, and whomever He pleases He allows to become overcome by their own pride. Allah said,

> **"*I will turn away from My signs those who are arrogant on the earth without right; and if they should see every sign, they will not believe in it.*"** (7:146)

Their turning away is the desire they have for living eternally in this world, while turning themselves away from the Hereafter.

The world is another kind of religion around which most people adhere themselves to. They may relate themselves traditionally to different religions, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism…etc. They all have one worldly concern to live for; they are completely absorbed in the affairs of the world and they forget the next world, and do nothing to prepare themselves for it, nor are they concerned with searching out the truth of religion. Allah said,

> **"*Every soul will be tasting death. And you will be paid your reward only on the Day of Resurrection. So, he who is drawn away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise, has indeed succeeded. for the life of this world is nothing but the enjoyment of delusion.*"** (3:185)

Every name of religion is derived from the names for some created beings, except for Islam.

Christians have named their faith after Jesus Christ, but *was Christ Christian*? Of course not. He was a follower of the Torah, revealed to Moses.

Judaism is derived from the name of Judah, but what was Judah's faith? In another word, *was Judah a Jew*?

Thus, we can see the birth of new religions that occurred at the same time as the birth of Judah and Christ.

The Buddhists take their name from Buddha, but *was Buddha* a *Buddhist*? What was the name of the true religion during the life time of Buddha?

We also ask, what was the name of the religion at the time of Abraham? [(1)] Though he was the father of the prophets, was he a Jew or a Christian? Not likely, since both Judah and Christ were his descendants and neither the Torah nor the Gospels were revealed until after he had gone.

If we were to say that either of these two religions, Judaism and Christianity, is the true faith, then what of those who died before the coming of the Messiah and who never knew about Christianity? What of those who died before Judah and who never knew Judaism? The answer to these incomprehensible questions is that we can be certain that all the prophets submitted in humility to the command of Allah. This is what the Arabs call Islam. They submitted and humbled themselves before Allah. This is the meaning of "Islam."

In this way we can know the religion of all the prophets through which they were brothers. It is the religion of Islam, Submission to Allah.

Islam does not derive its name from the name of any of Allah's creatures. It is not a mere name, but it is an abstract noun, a kind of description of behavior.

Whoever behaves in a certain way can be described as having this quality of "Islam." Whoever submits himself totally to the will of Allah, and abides by the limits which Allah has set, and who proclaims his unconditional obedience to Allah, who allies himself completely to Allah, he is a Muslim.

Allah does not name His religion after any person, nor is it dependent on the birth of any person, because the religion of Allah is the religion of all humanity from Adam to the last believer who will walk on the earth.

Allah had commanded that all of creation submit to Him, saying,

> "***And turn to your Lord and surrender to Him, before the punishment comes upon you suddenly, then you will not be helped."*** (39:54)

And He said,

> "***And who is there that has a fairer religion than he who submits his will to Allah, being a good-doer, and who follows the creed of Abraham, a man of pure faith?***' (4:125)

And He said,

([1]) It is noteworthy to know that the names of the prophets in Christianity changes from language to another, if you speak English you say Jesus but if you speak Spanish you say Khosies like wise Peter to Patros…Etc. I decided to mention the names of the prophets according to English language, yet I did not do the same concerning the name of Allah. Christians think that the word God is a proper noun while it's a common noun. The word God means One who people worship, while Allah refers to the name that should only be worship. If we fail to know the name of the true God then how far are we from guidance.

"Do they seek something different than the religion of Allah, when whoever is in the heavens and the earth submits to Him, willingly, or unwillingly, and to Him will be their return." (3:83)

All the prophets submitted humbly to the command of Allah, and they were the first of their peoples to do so. This is why they are called "Muslims" in the Qur'an:

"***Surely We sent down the Torah, in which was guidance and light; the prophets who submitted*** [to Allah] ***judge by it for the Jews.***" (5:44)

And again,

"Abraham was neither a Jew, nor a Christian; but was inclining toward truth, a submissive to Allah (Muslim) and he was never of the polytheists." (3:67)

The quality that is shared by all of the prophets is their submission to Allah. They were the humblest of all people before Allah, submitting to His command in all things. They were all brothers in a single faith. They committed themselves to this, to submission and to humility before Allah. This is why the Prophet ﷺ said, "The prophets are paternal brothers, their mothers are many, but their faith is one."(2)

Thus on the basis of that we conclude this:

How distant from the religion of the prophets is he who calls himself a Muslim but does not submit to Allah and does not pray to Him. Could someone be a Muslim, submitting to Allah, yet not pray and not pay *zakat* and not fast in *Ramadan* and not perform the Pilgrimage? Could he be a Muslim, submitting to Allah, and not hesitating to commit any forbidden act from fornication to drunkenness?

If Satan was ordered to prostrate to Adam but he refused to do so and thus he became the worst of creation, what then of someone who is commanded to prostrate himself to Allah, not to Adam, but refuses to do so out of pride?

The Proliferation of Religions

If the prophets all followed the same religion, why are there so many today, and who has invented all these religions?

Muslims believe that the prophets all conveyed the message of Allah to their peoples in the best possible way. But after them people started to disagree among themselves. They distorted the teachings of the prophets and the religion of Allah was splintered into different faiths. They adopted names to distinguish themselves, taken from the names of their prophets, and then claimed that they were the custodians of the true faith of the prophets. Allah said,

"***Mankind were of one nation*** [i.e one religion] ***then Allah sent the prophets as bringers of good tidings and as warners, and sent down with them the Book with truth to judge between people concerning that in which they differed. And none differed over it except those who were given it – after the clear proofs came to them out of jealous animosity among themselves- then Allah guided those who believed to the truth***

(2) Al-Bukhari (3442) and Muslim (2365).

concerning that over which they differed for, by His permission. For Allah guides whom He pleases to a straight path." (2:213)

Allah also cautioned us not to follow their ways,

"***And be not of the polytheists. Those who have divided their religion and become sects, every faction is content with the sect it has.***" (30:31-32)

The prophets have no responsibility for the chaos of beliefs that followed after them. Jesus did not tell anyone to call himself a Christian, rather his own followers told him,

" ***We believed in Allah and bear witness that we are Muslims*** [submissive]***.***" (3:52)

Judah did not tell anyone to call himself a Jew. Moses said to his people,

"***O people, if you have believed in Allah, then rely on Him if you are Muslims*** [submissive]***.***" (10:84)

The Christians began to argue with the Jews about Abraham. One claimed he was a Christian and another claimed he was a Jew. Allah replied saying,

"*Abraham was neither a Jew, nor a Christian; but was inclining toward truth, a submissive to Allah (Muslim) and he was never of the polytheists.*" (3:67)

Since Allah is One, then the Religion is One

All religions call for chastity and modesty. « Do not cheat, do not lie, do not kill... etc.» .

But which else other than the religion of Islam calls for the worship of the One God alone, declaring that no one deserves to be worshipped except the One Creator, rejecting any form of worship whether in prostration or supplication to anyone other than Allah?

This is the only gate today of entering Islam, and without this testimony, one can never be a Muslim. And it will be the condition tomorrow to enter Heaven, no one among those who link parts to Allah, and claim to be partners, sons, or mediators will ever enter Heaven.

For it is the place worthy to those who purely worshipped Allah alone as Abraham and the other prophets did. Is not this a sign that Islam is the true religion of Allah.

The Qur'an calls all humanity to a single faith, Islam. This is the religion of the prophets. Allah says, "***Surely religion to Allah is Islam.***" (3:19)

And stressed that this is the religion that He has chosen for His servants,

> "***Today I have perfected for you your religion, and completed My favor upon you, and approved for you Islam as religion.***" (5:3)

Allah will accept no other faith than this. This religion is the only thing that links a human being with his Lord. Through it a person's prayers, his good deeds and his charitable works are validated. Whoever worships Allah through some other faith will see his deeds rejected. Never will these bring him nearer to Allah Who said,

"***Whosoever desires other than Islam as religion – never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter will be among the losers***" (3:85).

SOURCES OF BELIEF

The source of doctrine should be taken from the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, in the way they were understood by those who were companions to the Prophet ﷺ.

It is not a thing which can be determined by *Ijtihad* [3]. This is not a matter of anyone's opinion, considered or otherwise. The doctrines of Islam are taken directly from Allah's source of guidance, the Book and the *Sunnah*.

Our first source of doctrine is the Qur'an. This was revealed by Allah to His Prophet ﷺ who was the last of all the prophets. Our second source, after the Qur'an, is the Prophet's *Sunnah*. Nothing else can compare with these two sources when we come to discover the doctrines of Islam. They reveal all that is permitted in terms of belief, and all that is forbidden.

([3]) *Ijtihad* means to exert one's effort by reasoning to differentiate right from wrong.

The Qur'an

No book on the face of the earth has been kept and cared for, as has the Quran by this Nation.

When the verses were revealed to the Prophet ﷺ he used to commit it to memory as it was revealed to him. The moment it descended, he then recited it in front of his companions and commanded them to write it down and collect it and read it back to him many times. Then he kept a copy of what they wrote down with him in his home.

As a result, the book today is preserved. The proof is more then one thousand four hundred years old and no one can dispute this fact. Isn't it enough proof that the Qur'an has been preserved?

Despite the differences among Muslims groups, we can emphasize that these are not based on the reliability of the Qur'an. In contrast, the differences among Christians are based upon the authenticity of the Bible, whether it should contain sixty-six books or seventy-three, and upon many other disputes about verses that have been omitted from the King James Version!

Some have claimed that the Qur'an was given to the Prophet ﷺ by Christian priests who used to meet with him regularly. But if there were Christians like those who were able to present a perfect book to Muhammad, why could not they produce a perfect Bible for the benefit of their own religion?

The Qur'an has been described as the "Book of Allah." In it, are the stories of those who passed before you, and the news of what will come after you, and it contains the judgement between those who differ among you. It is the unbending standard against which all things are measured. Whoever arrogantly abandons it, Allah will destroy him, and who ever seeks guidance of another, Allah will lead him astray. It is the solid rope of Allah, and His Remembrance and Wisdom, and it is His Straight Path. No soul that follows it will be deviated, nor can any tongue dress its truth in falsehood, nor can it become old by repeated recitation. Those who know it never tire of it. Its wonders are endless. It is the thing the *jinn* (4) are still saying since the first time they heard it:

> " ***We have heard an amazing Qur'an, it guides to the right course*** **(wisdom)*****, so we believed in it, and we will not associate with our Lord anyone.***" (72:1)

Whoever speaks by its words have spoken truth, and who ever acts upon it earns its reward, and Who ever judges by it, has done justice, and who calls others to it has guided people to the Straight Path."

The Qur'an is the last of the testaments revealed from heaven to mankind on earth. Allah made it to confirm what had come before it and as a watcher over them. Allah said,

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(4) *Jinn* Creatures that are made of fire, among them are those who believe, others are disbelievers.

“***Say, O mankind, the Truth has come to you from your Lord. So whoever is guided, is only guided for*** [the benefit of] ***his own soul, and whoever goes only goes astray against it, and I am not an over you a manager.***” (10:108)

THE Qur'an: the book of miracles

No human being can ever produce anything like the Qur'an, regardless of how eloquent, or how clear minded or how ingenious he may be. The Qur'an is a book that was revealed to the most eloquent among the Arabs, to a people who were famous for eloquence and for the inimitable style of their poetry. When they heard the Qur'an, they were astounded and speechless, and could only yield to its majesty. Still, this did not stop their arrogance and it did not prevent them from ignorantly asserting that it must be the work of the magicians or the *jinn*. They claimed that it would not be difficult for a poet to produce something like it, although they acknowledged the prophethood of Muhammad ﷺ.

So, Allah challenged them to produce something like it if they could. Ten *suras* (chapters). He said, but they could not. One *surah* and still they could not. The challenge was issued to all of humanity and to the *jinn*, and for all times.

Allah said,

"***Say, 'If men and jinn gathered to produce the like of this Qur'an, they do not produce its like even if they were to each other assistants'.***" (17:88)

This challenge has stood for a thousand and five hundred years and still no one has been able to answer it.

Allah said,

"***Or do they say, 'He forged it'? Say: 'then bring forth a chapter like it, and call upon whom you could*** [to assist you] ***apart from Allah, if you are truthful.***" (10:38)

Allah Himself has taken the responsibility of protecting and preserving it from anyone, who would twist or alter it, saying,

"***It is We who have sent down the Remembrance*** [revelation] ***and We are its guardians.***" (15:9)

But the miracle of the Qur'an is not just a matter of eloquence. Indeed, not an age has passed without some new miracle being discovered in it, something that was unknown to our predecessors.

Even today, in the age of science and technology, Western fair-minded scientists have admitted to the agreement between modern science and the Qur'an to the discovery of things the Qur'an has proclaimed for over a thousand years.

The Prophet ﷺ lived far from those who had detailed knowledge of science, and yet he used to know these discovered sciences because he had the connection with the One who created these sciences.

Allah said,

"***Have not those who disbelieved seen that the heavens and the earth were a joined entity, and We separated them, and We made from water every living thing? Will they not then believe***?" (21:30).

And He said,

"***We will show them Our signs in the horizons and in within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth. Is it not enough that Your Lord is a witness of everything?***' (41:53)

One who contemplates the Qur'an can find in it verses that speak of science unknown before a century or so ago. For example, we find verses that talk about planets and orbits in the solar system.
Allah said,

> "***And the sun runs*** [on course] ***toward its stopping point. That is the determining measure of the exalted in Might, the Knowing.***
> ***And the moon, We have measured it in phases until it returns*** [appearing] ***like an old day stalk.***
> ***Neither the sun*** [is allowed] ***to reach the moon, nor the night*** [is allowed] ***to win over the day. But each in an orbit is swimming.***" (36:38-40)

There are other verses that speak of Allah's creation, such as the one that mentions the barrier of water between the two seas, and the barrier between the fresh and salt water where a river flows into

the sea. This, in fact, was not discovered until the beginning of this century. (the 19th century).
Allah said,

> "***Or who*** [other than Allah] ***that has made the earth a stable ground, and placed within it rivers and made for it firmly set mountains and placed a barrier between the two seas? A god*** [should be taken] ***with Allah? Certainly, most of them are ignorant!***" (27:61)

Another verse speaks about the accumulation of clouds and how rain comes out of them:

> "***Didn't you see how Allah drives clouds, then brings them together, then makes them into a mass, then you see the rain emerge through it. And He sends down from the sky mountains*** [of clouds] ***within which is hail, So and He strikes with it whom He wills, and turns it away from whom He wills. The flash of its lightning nearly takes away the eyesight. Allah rolls the night and the day. Surely in that is a lesson for those with eyes.***" (24:43-44)

There are verses that speak of levels of waves in the sea, a kind of wave on the surface and another under it. This was, in fact, only discovered in this century.

> "***Or like darknesses in a bottomless sea with waves above waves, above which are clouds, darknesses, one is above the other. If one holds out his hand, he can hardly see it. Thus for whomever Allah makes no light, for him there is no light.***" (24:40)

There are verses that speak of the different stages of fetal development in the womb, and each stage is identified by a name that describes the form of the fetus:

> "***We created man from an extract of clay, then We set him as a sperm-drop in a firm lodging*** [i.e., the womb]***. Then We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot, then We made the clot into a lump*** [of flesh]***, then We made*** [from] ***the lump bones, then We covered the bones with flesh and***

then We developed him into another creation. So blessed is Allah, the Best of Creators! (23:12-14)

These verses describing all the stages of well-ordered fetal development, as well as others, caused Dr. Keith Moore – one of the most respected embryologists, to confirm these observations in his book *The Developing Human,* saying that the Qur'an has described this accurately, and well before human science could ever have done it.

The second source
the *Sunnah*

The *Sunnah* is an important source of doctrine and its understanding. This is because:

- It contains prohibitions and allowances that are not mentioned in the Qur'an.
- It explains the verses of the Qur'an and tells the incident or the circumstance by which the verses were revealed.
- It elaborates the abstract verses.
- It unlimits the limited verses.

An example is the verse saying,

"***For those who did good*** (their reward) ***is good and even more.***" (10:26)

The term "more", The Prophet ﷺ explained, means a vision of the face of Allah in Paradise. No one would have been able to know what more, people of Paradise will be given until the *Sunnah* explained it.

Another is the meaning of the verse , "***and establish prayer.***" Allah said simply, establish prayer, but did not say how many prayers, nor even how we should pray. Similarly, we are commanded to pay *zakat* (charity), but no details of how this is to be assessed or how often it is to be paid or given. These details come to us from the *Sunnah*. The *Sunnah* also contains prohibitions that are not mentioned in the Qur'an.

Because of this, Muslims have all agreed that the *Sunnah* must be a second source for Islamic doctrines and beliefs.

The Prophet ﷺ explained this saying, "I have left you with two things. You shall never go astray so long as you hold tightly on to them: The Book of Allah, and my *Sunnah*."(5)

Allah has commanded us to obey His Prophet ﷺ saying,

"***Whoever obeys the Prophet has obeyed Allah***" (4:80).

If obedience to Allah means following what was revealed in the Qur'an, then obedience to the Prophet ﷺ means to keep to his *Sunnah*. Allah said,

"***It is He who has raised up among the common people a Messenger from themselves, reciting to them His verses and purifying them, and teaching them the Book and the Wisdom.***" (62:2)

Wisdom is the *Sunnah* according to Ibn Abbas's explanation of this verse. Allah said,

"***Whatever the Messenger has given you then take-it, and whatever he has forbidden you-refrain from it.***" (59:7)

The Prophet ﷺ said, "I was given the Qur'an and something like it with it."(6)

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(5) Malik, *Muwatta*, 1:93.
(6) *Tirmidhi*. Narration is authentic.

Whoever rejects the *Sunnah* which the Prophet ﷺ brought to us has disobeyed Allah in conformity with this verse, and has not taken what the Prophet ﷺ brought.

The Prophet ﷺ said "I should not find any of you leaning upon his couch who, when told of something that I ordered, then says, 'I don't know, (I know only the Qur'an)! We only follow what we find in the Book of Allah'" The Prophet ﷺ then said, "I have been given the Qur'an and something like it with it!"(7) In another narration he said, "The Messenger of Allah has forbidden things as Allah has forbidden things."(8)

This is confirmed by what Allah said in the verse,
"***Fight those who do not believe in Allah nor in the Last Day, those who do not forbid what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden.***" (9:29)

Allah also informs us of the Prophet's

> "***He enjoins upon them what is lawful, and forbids them what is unlawful.***" (7:157)

Both of these verses confirm that the Prophet ﷺ does prohibit and permit as Allah does.
This being the case, the *Sunnah* contains prohibitions and permissions that do not appear in the Qur'an, which was the first part of the revelation. Then what is prohibited and what is permitted must depend on correct and sound narrations, since Allah has forbidden us to declare things to be lawful or unlawful by doubtful evidence.

As example of what was prohibited in the *Sunnah* but not in the Qur'an, is the use of animals with fangs as food, and the eating of birds with talons, and the eating of domestic donkeys, and the wearing of gold and silk by men, while women may wear both.

An example of what was permitted, according to the *Sunnah*, what is found dead in the sea may be eaten though it had not been slaughtered. Allah said, "***Maitah*** [animals found dead unslaughtered](9) ***are forbidden to you***" (5:3).
Then, the *Sunnah* made an exception to this for fish.
Allah said,

> "***you have an excellent pattern in the Messenger of Allah,*** [an example to follow] ***for he who hopes Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah often.***" (33:21)

How then could a Muslim take the Messenger as an example, while he rejects his *Sunnah* and claims it has nothing to do with him?
Sometimes the *Sunnah* restricts the meaning of the Qur'an. Allah said,

> "***Oh believers, prescribed for you is legal retribution for those murdered - the free for the free, the slave for the slave, and the female for the female.***" (2:178)

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(7) Bukhari and Muslim.
(8) *Tirmidhi* No. 2663. *Albani* said in *mishkat* "*Authentic*" (See mishkat No. 162-163)
(9) animals allowed to be eaten but were not slaughtered expressly for food.

The *Sunnah* pronounced that if the victim was a disbeliever and the killer was a Muslim, this ruling would not apply. The Prophetﷺ said that a Muslim would not be executed in retaliation for the killing of a disbeliever.

THE collection and recording of the sunnah

Those who believe that Allah has undertaken to preserve only the first part of His revelation (the Qur'an) and not the second part of it (the *Sunnah*) are mistaken. This error has led those who sometimes call themselves "*Quranists*" to deny the *Sunnah* and to restrict themselves to what is contained in the Qur'an.

They are also mistaken to believe that the verse of the Qur'an,

"***It is We Who have sent down the Remembrance, and it is on Us to preserve it.***"

(15:9) Applies exclusively to the Qur'an. In fact, this part of 'the Remembrance' comprises any of what Allah revealed to the Prophet, whether Qur'an and or *Sunnah,* both are covered by Allah's promise in this verse.

A practical example of how Allah preserves the *Sunnah* is the existence of people in every generation who devote their lives in memorizing the *Sunnah*, in learning it and in studying the critical analysis of its lines of transmission.

In the early years of his mission, the Prophet ﷺ did not permit anyone to write down what he had said. This was because he was afraid that people would get these mixed up with the Qur'an. He said, "Do not write down anything from me other than the Qur'an. Whoever has written down anything other than the Qur'an should erase it. There is no harm if you tell one another what I say, but whoever lies deliberately about me and says something that I did not say should prepare for himself a seat in hellfire."[(10)]

This prohibition on writing down the *Sunnah* was only disallowed at the beginning of his mission. Once the Qur'an was firmly set in the hearts of the companions and they had committed it to memory, the Prophet ﷺ began to permit them to write down what he said. Abu Hurrariya said, "None of the Prophet's companions are narrating more *hadiths* than me except for Abdullah bin Amr. He used to write, but I do not."[(11)] The Prophetﷺ was once speaking from the pulpit (*minbar*) and a man called Abu Sha asked him if he could write down what was said. The Prophet ﷺ said, 'Write for Abu Shah.'[(12)] So the Prophet allowed his words to be written.

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(10) Muslim, (3004).
(11) Bukhari, (113); Tirmidhi, (2670).
(12) Bukhari, (112); Abu Daud, (455).

How hadith *narrations are confirmed*

In the early years after the Prophet's death the companions used to write down *hadiths* without paying much attention to their *isnads*, or chains of transmission. But when Islam began to spread into new lands and the number of Muslims grew rapidly, certain intellectual currents began to stir. These in turn gave rise to sects and cults, such as the *Qadariyah* (who denied predestination and the *Jabriyah* who confirmed predestination wrongly, and numerous Sufi cults, not to mention new philosophical movements.

With these developments, deviant groups began to spread, calling people to extremist beliefs of one form or another. Some, like the Shias, glorified individuals, while others, such as the Sufis, began to invent extreme forms of asceticism and dependence upon beggary as they withdrew from the world, cutting all ties to their wives, children and parents.

Every sect began to fabricate *hadiths* to support its claims and many contradictory views and many innovations began to be expressed through fabricated *hadiths*. By that time, the companions and those who had come after them had begun to take an uncompromising stand in front of a babble of contradictory claims.

What we now know as the science of biography and biographical criticism appeared. This consisted in the detailed study of the circumstances and means by which a *hadith* had been transmitted, and included an assessment of the trustworthiness of those who related the account, their moral character, and their commitment in following the *Sunnah*.

It included considerations for the times in which they lived, the places where they lived, and information about the names of their fathers and their children, the names of their teachers and their students.

They divided the *hadith* into three broad categories:

1. *sahih* (correct).
2. *da'eef* (incorrect or weak).
3. *maudu* (false or fabricated).

The category of a *hadith* was determined by its *isnad* (chain of transmission) and by whether or not it met had the criteria for a particular group.

Ibn Sirin said, "They (the companions and their followers, *taabi'een*[(13)]) used not to ask about the isnad (names of narrators), but when the trials (of setting false narrations) began, we then started saying, 'name to us your narrators. After this they were observing cautiously the status of every narrator, and then they take narrations from those who were known to be followers of the *Sunnah*, and leave (or reject) the narrations of those who were known as innovators in religion." Also Abdullah Ibn al-Mubarak said, "*isnad* (observing chain of narration) is part of religion. Without *isnad,* any one will say what he desires."[(14)].

Scholars say that the science of *isnad* is a special gift of Allah to the nation of Muhammad. It was given in order to protect the trustworthiness of accounts.

The People of the Book have no connected chain of what they narrate about their prophets, so all their narrations in their books are disconnected. Likewise, the deviant innovators of this *Ummah* (nation).

This system of *isnad* is only for those to whom Allah has granted it, to the people of Islam and of the *Sunnah*, who use it to distinguish correct from incorrect narrations, to distinguish the straight from the twisted.

The people of innovation and the disbelievers only possess a mass of unchained stories that they depend upon and set as bases for matters of their religion, without knowing from where they came, and without knowing what is true from what is not; or what is beneficial from what is useless.[(15)]

([13]) The generation who did not see the Prophet but saw his companions who taught them the religion.

([14]) Muslim Volume 1 P. 15.
([15]) Ibn Sirin, *Majmu'a al-fatawa*, 1/9.

We can realize the extent of their accuracy in following up the chain of narration and the investigation of the status of every narrator when we see them, for example, distinguishing between two kinds of liars among narrators.

They call the first liar as *kaadhib,* one who was known to be a liar, but was not caught fabricating lies against the Prophet ﷺ. Therefore they define his narration as *munkar* (indefinite or indeterminate) narration.

While they define the second liar as *kadhaab,* one who was caught with lies against the Prophet ﷺ. And they define his narration as *Maudu'* apocryphal or spurious. This is the worst kind of narration and its use is extremely prohibited.

Many scholars have traced all of the fabricated *hadiths* we know of, and collected them into books, together with notes about them and warnings to people against them. This investigation and accuracy come as a fulfillment of what the Prophet ﷺ said, "It is enough evil that one narrates anything he hears." (i.e without examining the truth of what he narrates)(16)

Al-Shafi'i said that "The likeness of a person who seeks a *hadith* without *isnad* (examining its trustworthiness) is as the likeness of a wood gatherer who collects wood by night, carrying home with it a snake while he does not perceive it."(17)

Al-Shafi'I as well as other scholars demonstrated the methodology of their school of thought by saying, "The *sahih* (correct) *hadith* is our *madhhab* (i.e reliable source of knowledge that we ought to take before giving personal thoughts or verdicts)." (18) "Do not imitate us blindly apart from the correct *Hadith.*"

But people abandoned this methodology of their scholars when the words and the opinion of men became to them *madhhab*, even if their opinions were contradictory to the correct *sahih hadiths* of the Prophet ﷺ.

After words, other people after them made it obligatory to follow blindly what their scholars had forbade them.

Allah has preserved the *Sunnah* of His Prophet ﷺ with this science of *isnad*. He used for it reviewers, memorizers, and guardians of the Prophet's *Sunnah.*

The world did not know anyone equal to them in their wideness of memory which resulted in some of them memorizing almost one million *Hadith* with their narrators and texts.

They have set scientific rules for assessing the reliability of a *hadith* which are more stringent and more detailed than have ever been known before. Therefore, this Nation should return to the way of our predecessors of verifying the narrations about the Prophet ﷺ, and not narrating anything that it hears except after checking its chain of narration.

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(16) Muslim 1/10; Abu Daud, (4992).

(17) *Faid al-qadir*, 1/433.

(18) Meaning: the correct narration is the source of our school of thought, because the prophet's saying is more important than our thoughts, for what he has given us is taken from Allah. While usually the word *madhab* means « a school of thought».

One should be careful, that he is conveying what the Prophet ﷺ said, not a fabrication of the liars. The Prophet ﷺ said, “Whoever quotes a *hadith* of mine which he knows is a lie, he is one of two liars.” [19] And he said, “Whoever deliberately attributes a lie to me should prepare his place in hellfire.”

Whoever says, “The Prophet ﷺ said” should make sure that he said it, otherwise he will be conveying the falsehood of the liar, not the message of the Prophet ﷺ, and then he is subjecting himself to a seat of fire in Hell. For one should convey the message of the Prophetﷺ not that of the liar.

Many have been indulgent about this matter, and we find many authors of Islamic books do not indicate the degree of reliability of the *hadiths* that they cite in their books. They even use fabricated *hadith* which are untrue, and without saying anything more, refer to *hadiths* from primary sources such as Ahmad and Tirmithi that contain both correct and incorrect narrations. But this referring is still not sufficient unless degree of *hadith* reliability is shown, such as to say, “Narrated by Ahmad and it is correct,” or better yet to use only the reliable ones.

The reason why we find incorrect narrations being used is that some scholars allow incorrect narrations that contain the encouragement about virtue of an act. But it should be known that these scholars had set conditions for this case:

- That they not be extremely weak.
- That they be related to the act that was authentically legitimized.
- That one who uses them should mention clearly their weakness.
- That they be used only in the case of meritorious acts, such as urging people to righteousness.
- That one should never say, in this instance, “The Prophet ﷺ said…”

Even then, many scholars, including Yahya b. Ma’in, Ibn al-Arabi, Bukhari, and Muslim insisted that a *da’eef* (weak) *hadith* must never be related. They said that leniency in the matter of *hadiths* that relate to meritorious refers to acts that had been authentically proved by either by the Qur’an or the *sunnah*.

One should realize that Allah did not preserve the *sunnah* by using people who spent their lives in memorizing millions of narrations and distinguishing between the correct from the incorrect one, except to make it sufficient for our need of guidance. Therefore, what we have of the correct narrations should be enough for us, than using the incorrect ones.

([19]) That is to say, the person who relates a lie is the same as the person who makes it up.

the companions are The best interpreters of the book and *Sunnah*

The Prophet ﷺ explained the words of the Qur'an and their meaning to his companions. This gave them a great advantage over all those who came after them with regard to the interpretation of the Qur'an and the *sunnah*. No one could know the meaning of the Qur'an and s*unnah* better than they did.

The companions' understanding of the revelation and their acting upon it stands as proof against those who claim for themselves a special knowledge of its interpretation, contradictory to the true meaning they have understood.

So when two people disagree about the meaning of a *hadith* or a verse from the Qur'an, then we go back to the companions' understanding of the same text. This will close the way to those who interpret the Qur'an and the s*unnah* without knowledge, but with their false desires.

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud once said, "If you seek consolation, then seek it with the companions of the Prophet ﷺ. They were the purest of heart of this Nation and the greatest of them in knowledge. They were the least burdened and the most rightly guided of people. Therefore, you should know their merit and follow on their footsteps. Indeed, they were on the Straight Path."(20)

(20) *Jamii Bayanil Ilm* V. 2 P. 97 by *Ibn Abdel Barr*. See *mishkat* No. 193.

Preserving the Purity of the Sources and Avoiding Innovations

Muslims' zeal to maintain Islam from innovation must exceed the zeal of anything else. They must preserve the purity of the sources of religion from which our doctrines and beliefs spring. These must be protected from all additions, accretions and innovations.

There is nothing more damaging to the religion than two things:

1. *Shirk* (polytheism)
2. *Bid'a* (Innovation)

And nothing draws one nearer to His Lord except it was made lawful and recommended to him through the way of Allah and His revelation. Therefore, innovations do not draw him nearer to His Lord; in fact they only take him farther away.

For Allah has completed His religion, and perfected His blessings upon humanity, and He has described to us the means of worship that draw us nearer to Him.

Allah said,

> "***Today I have perfected for you your religion, and completed My favor upon you, and approved for you Islam as religion.***" (5:3)

The Prophet ﷺ said, "I have not left that which Allah had ordered you except I ordered you, and nothing that Allah has forbidden you from, except I have forbidden you from."(21) In another narration "There is nothing that draws you nearer to heaven but I ordered you to do, and there is nothing that draws you nearer to Hell but I warned you from doing."(22)

If that is the case, it is obligatory upon Muslims to restrict themselves to what Allah has set out for us, without making any additions or alterations to it. To follow has become obligatory and to innovate, is forbidden.

It is agreed that the best act of worship is the worship performed by the Prophet ﷺ. He did not sanction any of the innovations and new practices that are current today among many people. Is what the Prophet taught us not enough for us today? Do we want to do more than the Prophet did and his companions did? Are we more devoted servants of Allah than they were?

Without doubt we will die before accomplishing all kinds of worship that Allah ordained to us. Why then do we seek to add innovated worship?

Is it conceivable that we have worshipped Allah in all ways of worship (obligatory and advisable) and then sit down and ask for something more?

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(21) al-Shafi'i, *Kitab al-umm*, 7/289.
(22) Al-Baihaqy in his book *Alsunan* V 7 P. 76.

It is hard to believe that there is a person who could complete all of his obligations, all of the things that are praiseworthy, and all of the things that the *Sunnah* permits, in the most perfect way and then try to innovate, to invent some new kinds of worship.

Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "Follow and don't innovate, for what you have (been given) is already enough."(23) That is to say, Allah has laid down for you what is enough for you in the *Shariah (*The law of Allah).

Hudheifa, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "Every act of worship which the Prophet did not perform, perform it not."(24)

A little worship, following the *Sunnah*, is better than a great deal of innovated worship that does not follow it. In fact Allah will not accept any act of this great deal of innovated worship that is not sanctioned by the *Sunnah* at all. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Who invents something in this religion of ours, something that does not belong to it, will be rejected,"(25) and he said, "Whoever does a deed unsanctioned by us will have it rejected."(26)

It will not be accepted from the person who offers it, and indeed, he will be punished, rather than rewarded for it.

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(23) al-Tabarani and al-Darami 1/69; Ahmad 1/139.
(24) Al-Baaith Ala Inkaril Bidaa Wal-Hawaadith for Abu Shamah, P. 19 Edited by Darul Fikr Allubnani
(25) Bukhari and Muslim.
(26) Muslim.

The Prophet’s Last Advice

The Prophet ﷺ bade farewell to his companions in a sermon that caused them to weep and made their hearts tremble. This was just before he died.

Al-’Irbaad Ibn Saariyah said, “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave us a sermon that brought tears to our eyes and made our hearts tremble. We said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, this sounds as if it were a farewell sermon that you are giving us.’ He said, ‘I have left you on a safe path, it is by day as it is by night. No one strays from it after me but he is perishing. Those of you who survive will see much dissension. You must follow what you have learned from my *Sunnah*, and the *Sunnah* of my rightly-guided successors. Hold fast to it by your teeth, and beware of innovations. For every innovation is *bid’a* and every *bid’a* is misguidance.”(27)

The Prophet ﷺ said that every innovation is misguidance, This is a proof that innovation is absolutely blameworthy in religion. It is wrong to view any kind of innovation in religion as a positive thing, or to say that some kinds of innovation are good, *bid’a hasana* (good innovation), as opposed to bad innovations. If this were the case, then the Prophet ﷺ would have made this distinction. But in fact, he never mentioned *bid’a* without saying that it was a blameworthy thing. Ibn Hajr al-Asqalani said, “Innovation is blameworthy according to the *Shariah* (*law*).

This is different from the linguistic meaning of the word: an innovation is something that is new and has not been done before, good or bad.”(28) The meaning of innovation in Islamic law is restricted to religion to be always blameworthy.(29)

The companions of the Prophet ﷺ and those who came after them in the first generations of Muslims all understood that his words “all *bid’a* is error manifest” meant that all innovations in religion were absolutely blameworthy.

Thus we hear Ibn Omar saying, “All *bid’a* (innovation) is error manifest even though some people may see good in it.”(30)

Ibn Majishun said, “I heard Malik say ‘Whoever has introduced an innovation into Islam and sees that it is a good thing has asserted that Muhammad ﷺ betrayed the Message. Allah said,

> “***Today I have perfected for you your religion, and completed My favor upon you, and approved for you Islam as religion.***” (5:3),

What was not taken religion on that day is not considered religion today, and nothing will reform the last of this nation other than what reformed the first of them.”(31)

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(27)Tirmidhi, 1/22; al-Hakim, 1/96; Ahmad, 4/126.
(28) al-Asqalani, *Fath al-bari*, 13/252.
(29) *ibid*. 12/278.
(30) al-Ilkani, *Sharh usul i’tiqad ahl al-sunnah*, 126.
(31) al-Shatibi, *al-I’tisam*, 1/39.

It is true that innovation can be divided into good innovations and bad innovations. This is its meaning in language. But with regard to the *Shariah*, such a distinction is not permitted.(32)

Language has its own dimension of meaning.

You can see that the Arabic word *salah* (prayer) means the same as *du'aa* (supplication), but according to the *Shariah* there is a distinction.

Salat is a combination of actions of worship that follows a particular form: a recitation accompanied by specific gestures and physical movement. It begins with *takbir* and ends with *taslim*.

Iman bears the meaning of confirmation. According to the *Shariah, iman* is a confirmation, a word and a deed, while with respect to language, *iman* is only a matter of confirming something.

Those who restrict its meaning in *Shariah* according to its common meaning in language will make the same error as the *Murj'ia* (33) sect did.

Innovators or inventors of worldly affairs are many. We see many different kinds of innovation and invention. Some of it is beneficial to people, such as the invention of automobiles and airplanes, and some of it is detrimental to us, such as the invention of atomic bombs and of novel forms of depravity. But whoever adds anything to Allah's *Shariah* has usurped Allah's right to establish His *Shariah*.

Allah said, "

> "***Or do they have partners*** [other deities] ***who have allowed (matters in) religion that Allah did not allow***?" (42:21).

Any addition to religion is in fact modification and an amendment to what Allah and His Messenger have given us. What is more, it is a clear contradiction of Allah's words,

> "***We have completed***" and "***We have perfected***."

Allah, Most High, is not to be worshipped according to whim and according to custom. Rather, He is to be worshipped according to what He revealed to us. Allah will not accept the worship of anyone who approaches Him with an innovation. He will only accept worship performed according to what He has ordained, not according to what someone may think is nice.

Finally, innovation in religion leads to the neglect of the *Sunnah*. Hassan bin Atiya said, "No people who innovate anything in their religion but Allah removes from them something of the *Sunnah* like it, and He will not return it to them until the Day of Resurrection."(34)

The fundamental principle of *bid'a* is rejected, whether it is large or small. Satan decorates small innovations and trains people to accept them.

Once they have accepted a small innovation and the principle of innovating becomes acceptable to them, then they become able to accept a bigger one after Satan

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(32) The "good innovation," the *bid'a hassana*, is a fantasy of the innovators who hope to add to Allah's religion.

(33) Those who separate actions from faith claiming that faith can be established even without actions.

(34) Al-Darami, 1/45.

has brought them gradually to it. They are then on the road to the largest innovations. Allah said,

> "***O believers, follow not the steps of Satan.***" (24:21).

The unacceptability of *bid'a* is not a matter of its size, rather it is rejected because of its nature, for false is false whether big or small.

The Position of the *Salaf* [35] Regarding Innovation in Religion

Al-Darami relates an account of Abu Musa al-Ashari, who came across some people in the mosque doing something he did not like. So he went to Ibn Mas'ud and told him,

"I saw some people in the mosque sitting in circles waiting for the prayer to start. Every circle had a leader and the people had pebbles in their hands. The leader would say, 'Say *Allahu Akbar* one hundred times, and they would do it. Then he would say, 'Say *La ilaha ila Allah* a hundred times, and they would do it. Then he would say, 'Say *Subhan Allah* a hundred times, and they would do it."

Ibn Mas'ud asked, "What did you tell them?" Abu Musa said, "I didn't say anything. I wanted to see what you thought about it." Ibn Mas'ud said, "Didn't you tell them to count their sins and I guarantee that nothing of their good deeds would be lost?"

Then Ibn Mas'ud went to one of these circles and said, "What is it the thing I see you doing" They said, "We are using pebbles to count the times we remember Allah (such as *Allahu Akbar, La ilaha ila Allah,* and *Subhan Allah*)."

He said, "Why don't you count your sins, then make sure that none of your good deeds will be lost. O people of Muhammad, how swiftly you bring yourselves to destruction. The companions of your Prophet are still among you, his garments are not frayed and his cup is not broken.

By He in Whose Hand is my soul, you are people who are either more rightly guided than the people of Muhammad, or you have opened a door rushing headlong to manifest error."

They said, "By Allah, we only had good intentions." Ibn Mas'ud said, "How many are those who seek the good, but do not reach it? For I heard the Prophet ﷺ saying, 'There will be a people who recite the Qur'an and it will not pass beyond their throats.' Allah knows whether most of them are among you."

Then he left them. Amr ibn Salama said, "We saw many of them fighting us on the day of the battle of Al-Nahrawan, with the Al-Khawarij."[36]

Conclusion

1. The One who has set forth for us aspects of worship – such as here *dhikr* (remembrance) did not forget to ordain for us the way it is to be done, that is to count on the knucklebones of the right hand such as the Prophet ﷺ taught us to do.

([35]) Meaning: predessesors (i.e the companions of the prophet Muhammad).

([36]) al-Darami, 1/68.

2. Innovation negates the *Sunnah* and leads people to abandon it. Whence they innovate anything in their religion they will be distracted from following the *Sunnah.*

3. Satan tries to convince people to accept small innovations. If they do this he pushes them to do something more, like he did with the people whom Ibn Mas'ud reprimanded. They started reciting *tasbih* (praising) and counting with stones, and ended by taking up arms against the companions of the Prophet ﷺ and making their blood lawful.

The Consequences of *Bid'a* (innovation)

When people became indulgent about this matter, disorder began to spread in the religion. We began to see innovation-taking root, first in the call to prayer and then in the prayer itself, then in all kinds of worship. Once it started to spread, it knew no bounds. Much of what the Prophet ﷺ and his companions used to do was transformed beyond recognition. This is a situation that could never be pleasing to Allah and His Messenger.

What has befallen is backwardness and the empowerment of the enemies of Allah over us. We are largely responsible for this situation. So long as we do not take the initiative to put a stop to this constant adding to our religion, so long as we do not take the initiative to command what is right and forbid what is wrong, then the condition of this Nation can only go from bad to worse.

Nothing is more detrimental to a person's faith than *bid'a* and *shirk*. Satan's greatest aim is to plant these two things in the hearts of Muslims as he did to others before them, till they changed the whole of Islam. Then generations coming after them will think that Islam is a new innovation and they will be changed from faithfulness to faithlessness.

Following will remain always the criterion, test, and the measure of love.

One can not combine the loving of the Prophet ﷺ, and the innovation to his *Sunnah*.

For love is a claim that needs the proof of one's truthfulness.

Imam Ahmad showed the essentials of following the *Sunnah* by saying "The bases of *Sunnah* is the clinging to the attitude of the Prophet's companions, following their example, and abandoning innovations, for every innovation is misguidance, and the abandonment of dispute in religion."

Section Two

Aspects of Faith

THE NEED OF KNOWING THE ONENESS OF ALLAH (TAWHID)

Tawhid is the unalienable right of Allah upon His servants to worship Him alone, Who created them out of nothing, and who subjected to them all what is in the heavens and the earth, and showered His blessings, both seen and unseen, upon them.

Allah has taken it upon Himself to grant whoever accords Him this right the reward of Paradise.

The Prophet ﷺ once told his companion, Muadh, "Do you know the right of Allah before His servants and the right of His servants before Him?"

Muadh said, "Allah and His Messenger know best." The Prophet ﷺ said, "It is Allah's right for His servants exclusively to worship Him and not associate anything else with Him, and it is then the right of servants upon their God that He punishes not those who worship Him and none other than Him". [37]

Because it relates directly to Allah, to His Divine Names and Attributes, the science of *tawhid*, the Unity of Allah finds itself at the very center of Islamic learning and the most honorable knowledge to be sought. Indeed, Allah called all the prophets to teach the sublime and indivisible Unity of the Creator.

> " ***We sent never a Messenger before you except that We revealed to him that 'There is no deity but Me; so worship Me.'*** " (21:25)

Knowledge of *tawhid* is obligatory for every Muslim since the correctness of a person's religion depends on the correctness of the things he believes in.

Allah has forbidden all that worship others than Him from entering Paradise, and will not allow anyone who worships Him alone – even when he may enter Hell - to abide eternally in it.

Therefore, our need for a correct understanding of the absolute oneness of Allah is greater even than our need for food and water.

If losing food and water means the loss of the means of living, losing the knowledge of the oneness of God means the loss of the elements of everlasting happiness in this world and in the next.

Losing the issue of *tawhid* means losing the essence of happiness in this world and in the next to come, and then losing the perfect security of the soul at peace with the One.

For the true guarantee for tomorrow's salvation is worship the Creator alone through His way, without mediators between.

Tawhid is the right of Allah upon you, and Paradise is the promise of Allah for whosoever implements *tawhid*.

([37]) Bukhari, (7373).

The human heart can find no rest except in communion with its Lord, in drawing near to Him and to what pleases Him and in shunning what displeases Him.

There can be no goodness but *tawhid* is its root, and there is no evil, in this world or the next, but *shirk* is its root and no calamity or difficulty, but can be released by *tawhid* and its testimony.

Jonah was saved by the word of *tawhid* (uttering a confirmation) of God's oneness when he called out from the belly of the whale saying,

> "***There is no god but You, Glory be to You, I have been indeed of those wrongdoers.***" (21:87)

Allah also said,

> "***Had he not been of those who exalt Allah*** [in remembrance] ***He would have remained inside its belly until the day they are resurrected.***" (37:144)

The Prophet ﷺ was asked: "Is this salvation of that word special for Jonah or it is for every Muslim? He replied, "It is for every Muslim." (Tabari V. 17 P. 65)

Allah, has made this word *La Ilaha Illallah (*There is no God but Allah) a word of salvation and deliverance from every calamity, a key to Islam in this life, and the key to Paradise tomorrow.

Features of *Tawhid*

There are several important features of *tawhid* that we should discuss here: The first of these is:

1. *tawhid Al-ruboobia.* This is based firmly in the belief that Allah is the One, the Single Sustainer and Provider, and that He has no partners or associates. It is He who created the heavens and the earth and all that they contain, and none shares divinity with Him.

2. *Tawhid Al-Uloohia.* means to worship Him only whom we believe as One Creator. To believe in the first category only is useless if the second is not applied, in other words, *tawhid Al-ruboobia* must be compared with *Tawhid Al-Uloohiya* (to worship the One).

3. *Tawhid Al-Asmaa Wassifaat.* Means believing in the most beautiful and perfect names and attributes of Allah. False notions about Allah, His names and attributes would lead to the corruption of one's faith and then it will not be beneficial even to believe in one God, such as believing that He needs to take rest or His knowledge is not perfect, such as also this story in the Bible which reads,

"And the Lord spoke to Moses "Speak to the children of Israel.. They shall take for them a lamb.. You shall eat it with your loins girded, and your shoes on your feet, and you shall eat it in haste: For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, and the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the Land of Egypt." (Exodus 12:1-13)

It is blasphemy in Islam to believe that Allah requested from His servants to make a sign for Him at the door-step in order to identify the inhabitants, whether they are Israelites or Egyptians!

The Merits of *Tawhid*

Tawhid has many merits and virtues:

- It is based on the believing - and then the worshiping – of the One Creator alone apart from any other partner.
- It is a simple belief, free of complex doctrines and philosophies, untouched by secrets and mysteries. For mystery and guidance are words with two opposite meanings.
- It liberates man from the bondage of *shirk,* from the worship of created things beside Allah to the worship of the One Who created them. Allah said,

  "***Legislation*** [ruling] ***is not but for Allah; He has commanded that you worship none but Him.***" (12:40)

Ruler and ruled should both be ruled and governed by the judgement of Allah alone. The first *khalifa*, the first successor to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to say,

"Obey me in so far as I obey Allah among you, but if I disobey Him, then there is no more obedience to me over you." (Assunan for Al-Baihaqy V. 6 P. 353)

■ It stands constantly and in harmony with the nature of mankind, without contradiction. Nature and the religion of Allah both tighten to *tawhid*, no trinity, no partners with god, no Idols, no mediators, and no innovations.

■ It is a stable and solid creed that does not change with the passing of time or the turning over of generations.

■ It is a belief supported by unimpeachable proof and evidence to prove that it is always sound and correct, and you may contemplate the following verses from the Qur'an:

> "***Oh people, an example is given so listen to it. Those you invoke apart from Allah will never create a fly even if they gathered together for*** [doing] ***it; and even if a fly should steal a*** [tiny] ***thing from them they could not recover it from it. Weak are*** [both] ***the seeker and the sought!***" (22:73)
>
> **"*Had there been gods other than Allah in them*** [i.e, the heavens and the earth] ***both would have been ruined; so glory be to Allah, the Lord of the Throne above what they describe.***" (21:22)

"The example of those who have taken allies to them apart from Allah, is as the likeness of the spider who takes ***[construct]*** a house; and indeed the weakest of houses is the house of the spider, if they but know.***" (29:41)***

> "***Say, 'Do you see what you invoke besides Allah? If Allah decided to harm me, could they remove His harm from me? Or if He wished me a mercy, could they hold His mercy back?" Say, "Allah is enough for me upon Whom*** [alone] ***rely the dependents.***" (39:38)
>
> "***Those whom you invoke apart from Allah are servants like you; so call them and let them respond to you, if you are truthful.*** " (7:194)
>
> "***Have they not seen that Allah, Who created the heavens and earth - and did not fail in their creation - is able to give life to the dead? Yes; surely He is powerful over everything.***" (46:33)

■ *Tawhid* calls us to abandon on following blindly the traditions of parents and ancestors and requires us to think deeply and carefully, to seek the truth with sincerity and determination.

“**And thus We never sent a Warner before you** *[Muhammad]* **into any town but the wealthy** *[affluent]* **ones among them said, "We found our fathers following a way, and we’re seeking the guidance of their footsteps. Then** *[each warner]* **said, "What if I brought you a guidance that is than what you found your fathers following?" They said, "We reject what you’ve been sent with**.” *(43:23-24)*

“***And when it is said to them, ‘Follow what Allah has sent down,’ they say, ‘No; but we follow what we found our fathers doing.’ What if their fathers had no understanding of anything, and if they were not guided?*** (2:170)

In an other verse:

“ ***What if Satan was calling them*** (their fathers) ***to the torment of Hellfire!***” (31:21)

■ *Tawhid* is a call to moderation with no excessiveness or extremism. Indeed, religious extremism always has disastrous consequences. Islam steers a middle course between those who insulted the Messiah, scorned him, and finally rejected him, and those who exaggerated their love for him to the point of worshipping him as God. The Messiah was not a liar as the Jews say, and neither was he God and Sustainer as the Christians claim. Jesus is a servant of Allah and a messenger sent by Him.

The Islamic creed is an indivisible whole made up of a series of doctrines, each linked to the other. Denial of any one of these constitutes becomes a denial of all of them. It is useless faith for someone to believe that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, but deny that Moses and Jesus were also Allah’s messengers. It is useless faith for someone who believes that the Qur’an is divinely revealed but deny the revelation of the Torah and the Gospel.(38)

Christians and Jews believe in part of Allah’s revelation and deny other parts. While the Muslim obliges himself to believe in the books that were revealed unto Moses and Jesus, we find neither the Christians nor Jews believe in the Qur’an.

Christians and Jews continue to believe in some of the prophets and reject others. The Jews disbelieve in Jesus and Christians disbelieve in Muhammad. While

(38) The Torah is the Revelation received by Moses. The Pentateuch contains the five books the Jews believe were revealed to Moses. We do not know how much of the revelation received by Moses, if any, has survived in these books. The Gospel is the Revelation received by Jesus. The four Gospels of the Christians are biographies of Jesus containing some of his teachings. They also include accounts of his birth and death. None of the Gospels are attributed to Jesus and none of them could have been the Gospel referred to in Islamic sources.

Christians appeal to the Jews to believe in Jesus, they take a negative action against Muhammad similar to that of the Jews against Jesus, and both agree upon the denial of Muhammad. While Islam appeals to both cults to believe in all books and all messengers.

Christians and Jews will not be appealing to the Muslims to believe in Jesus and Moses, for the Muslim knows that believing in Moses and Jesus is one of the conditions of faith rooted in the belief in Muhammad, and to deny any of the prophets would be a denial of all of them.

Allah said in the Qur'an,
"***The people of Noah denied the messengers.***" (26:105)

We know that Noah's people did not deny all of the messengers, they only denied Noah. But Allah regarded their denial of Noah as a denial of the rest of all the messengers.

Thus Allah says in the Qur'an,

> "***Those who disbelieve in Allah and His messengers, and wish to discriminate between Allah and His messengers and say: we believe in some and disbelieve in others, and wish to adopt a way between: those are the disbelievers truly. And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment.*** " (4:150)

Then the focus is immediately shifted to belief and Allah says,

> “***But for those who believe in Allah and His messengers and do not discriminate between any of them – to those He is going to give their rewards. And Allah is ever Forgiving, most Merciful.***” (4:152)

Muslims still continue on calling the Jews and the Christians to believe in the message of Muhammad ﷺ and both communities still refuse to believe in his Prophethood. The attitude of the Muslim will always be, “We make no distinction between one and the other of Allah’s messengers”. While the attitude of the Christians is “ We make distinction between them: Jesus is a prophet but better than all prophets because he is also god, and Muhammad is not a prophet.

And the attitude of the Jews is that Jesus and Muhammad are not prophets.

They deny Muhammad simply because he is the son of Hajar but not Sarah, and because Paul encouraged not to listen to the son of the concubine (slave) woman, but Allah does not make difference between His servants and He chooses whom He pleases for His message.

God is not Racist

The Bible says,

“*For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave, and one by a free woman… But what does the scripture say? ‘Cast out the slave and her son; for the son of the slave shall not inherit with the son of the free woman.’ So, brethren we are not children of the slave but of the free woman.*” (Galatians 4:22)

Absolute Monotheism the Essence of Islam

Declaring the Oneness of Allah is the first condition for admission to the community of Islam. This is, in itself, sufficient proof of the soundness of this religion, and the emptiness and falsity of other religions.

For there is no other religion but Islam which stipulates such a condition from its believers, and no other religion excludes from its community of faith those who do not proclaim it.

"**There is no god but Allah**": is the key to Paradise and of salvation from the torment of Hell. One who comes at the Day of Judgement without this key will find no path to Paradise, even if he had believed in the Prophethood of Muhammad, recited the Qur'an, performed the five daily prayers, fasted the month of *ramadan* and believed in everything else that Muslims believe.

Indeed, Allah has made it clear to us that the good deeds of those who associate others with Him will not be accepted even if that person were a prophet or a messenger.(39) Thus Allah told the Prophet Muhammad, as He had told the prophets before him,

> "***It was revealed to you and to those before you*** [that] ***'If you should associate*** [anything with Allah] ***your work would surely become worthless, and you would surely be among the losers.'***" (39:65-66)

And speaking of the prophets, He said,

> "***But if they had associated others with Allah, then surely worthless would be whatever they were doing.***" (6:88)

- **There is no god but Allah.** This is absolute faith, the foundation of belief in the One God, the essence and the title of Islam, without which belief is impossible. It is the way to a life of fulfillment, the key to happiness and of goodness in this world and the means and secret of salvation in the next.
- **There is no god but Allah.** This is the most absolute of truths and the most noble of them, as the Prophet ﷺ said, "The best thing that I and the prophets before me have ever said is: There is no god but Allah."(40)
- **There is no god but Allah.** This is a phrase of liberation which sets humanity free from slavery to created things, from submission and servility to rulers and tyrants, and makes them servants only of the One Who created them.
- **There is no god but Allah.** This means refusing to worship of worshiping anything besides Allah, and to affirm that worship is the right of Allah alone.
- **There is no god but Allah.** This is the slogan of the Oneness of God, which is the spirit of Islam and the essence of belief. Worship has no value before Allah, and no chance of being accepted by Him, if it does not rest upon this foundation. There is no god but Allah.

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(39) Muslims distinguish between a Prophet, who is chosen by Allah to call his people to the Oneness of God, and to submission to Him alone, and a Messenger, who is also given a revelation. There have been many prophets, but few messengers. Among the messengers of Allah were Moses, David, Jesus and Muhammad, Peace be upon them.

(40) Bukhari, (3579)

• **There is no god but Allah.** This was the first thing that all the prophets called their people to.

"***And We never sent a Messenger before you except that We revealed to him that, 'There is no god but Me; so worship Me.***'" (21:25)

The denial in this phrase "There is no god" precedes the affirmation "but Allah." This is because faith in Allah can only come after you have denied false deities that are worshipped instead of Him. Thus Allah says,

"***So whoever disbelieves in Taagoot*** [idols][41] ***and believes in Allah, has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it.***" (2:256)

And the Prophet said, "Whoever says, 'There is no god but Allah' and denies whatever is worshipped besides Him, his property and his blood are protected and his recompense is with Allah." (Muslim 32 Book of Faith)

The Conditions Of Testimony
LA ILAHA ILA'LLAH

What does it mean to declare the Oneness of God?

Simply saying, "**There is no god but Allah**" without understanding the meaning of these words, and without acting upon them is not enough. Yet sadly, this is the state of many Muslims today who do not observe what Allah has commanded and who do not avoid what He has prohibited. While they fail to perform the five daily prayers, fail to give alms, and fail to avoid bank interest, they assure themselves that by simply saying "There is no God but Allah" they will be saved.

The Prophet's own people, the Quraish, knew that to say these words meant that they would shoulder an obligation to live and act according to them, and for this reason many of them refused to pronounce them. Indeed, if this were merely a matter of saying a few words they would have said them and saved themselves from the hardship of confrontation that their refusal brought them.

But what are these obligations?

• **Knowledge**, We must seek to know the rights of this Declaration of Faith and what it requires. Allah said, "***Know then, that there is no god but Allah***," and the Prophet ﷺ said "Whoever dies while knowing that there is no god but Allah, shall surely enter Paradise." And he said, "Whose last words are 'There is no god but Allah' shall surely enter Paradise." (Ahmad in his musnad 1:65 & Abu Dawood 3116).

Here also we should be aware that it is Allah who strengthens whom He will in uttering that word of truth (***La Ilaha Illallah***) since He knows best who deserve it to be his last word, for He has said,

"***Allah strengthens those who believe with the firm word***[42]***,in the present life and in the world to come; and Allah leads astray the evildoers; and Allah does what He will.***" (14:27)

([41]) The Arabic original reads *taghut*, which has a much wider meaning than it is possible to give with one word in English. *taghut* is any false object of worship, such as idols, images, or other things that lead to tyranny and to exceeding the limits of decency. Whatever is worshipped beside or alongside Allah is *taghut*, and whoever calls or commands people to worship others beside or alongside Allah is also *taghut*".

([42]) The firm word is the testimony that there is no deity except Allah, and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. When one utters it as his last word before death and to give it as an answer to the angels in the grave, this would be a good sign of his salvation.

He whose deeds are contradictory to the conditions of his testimony will not be helped by saying it before his death, neither in this life nor in the grave when he will be questioned therein.(43)

•**Certainty** and sureness of the truthfulness of, ***La Ilaha Illallah*** (There is no god but Allah) without doubt. The Prophet said, “Whoever says There is no god but Allah, with sincerity of heart, with honesty and conviction of both heart and tongue , shall surely enter Paradise.”

•**Acceptance.** That is to accept all its conditions, for the rejection of some of Allah’s law is equal of rejecting all.

• **Sincerity.** This is to pronounce the word ***La Ilaha Illallah*** (There is no god but Allah) with complete sincerity, that is to be sincere in worshipping Allah, dedicating all acts of worship to Him alone. For whoever says it sincerely from his heart, Allah will guide him to sincere worship. The Prophet ﷺ has said, “The best one among people with the most right to my intercession on the Day of Resurrection is he who said ‘There is no god but Allah’ sincerely from his heart.”[44]

• **Submission.**This is to comply to the conditions of ***La Ilaha Illallah*** (There is no god but Allah) by the tongue, and to believe it in the heart, and to fulfill its conditions by deeds. As for the hypocrites, they say in their tongues what is different in their hearts.

One should ask of what value is it believe in Allah without submitting to Him!

Whoever professes that there is no god but Allah must then do what Allah has commanded the believers to do and refrain from what He has prohibited. They must obey Allah and not defy His will, and they must put obedience to Allah before obedience to all others; there can be no compliance to disobedience to Allah. As the Prophet ﷺ said, “There is no obedience to any creature that which is disobedient to the Creator.”(45) The Prophet ﷺ also said, “Whoever seeks Allah’s pleasure despite the indignation of people will earn the pleasure of Allah and the pleasure of the people; and whoever seeks the pleasure of people at the indignation of Allah will earn the displeasure of Allah and the loathing of the people.”(46)

Good works are the fruit of faith and follow naturally from it. Thus Allah always mentions faith and good works together, “***those who believe and do good works***.”

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(43) *See annotation.*
(44) Bukhari (6570).
(45) Imam Ahmad (4:432), *Sahih* according to al-Albani, *Silsilla* p. 179)
(46) al-Qida`i, *Musnad al-Shihab* cf. al-Albani, *Sharh al-Tahawiyyah*,p. 299.

Contradiction Of Faith

Contradiction is a form of denial: some types of contradiction may contradict the whole faith completely, and some may contradict some faith of a person, whose faith then becomes incomplete. A contradiction of faith comes in several forms:

1. **A word of disbelief**. Such as cursing Allah, the Prophet, or Islam, or by deriding religion generally.

2. **An act of disbelief**. Such as prostrating to images and idols, addressing prayers to someone other than Allah, or seeking to be ruled by other than Allah's law.

3. **A dogmatic disbelief**. That is polytheism which contradicts monotheism. This is a tacit denial of faith, such as believing in the existence of another god, or the belief that someone other than Allah can answer our prayers, or that someone other than Allah can release us from calamities, or do us harm, or bring us benefit, or that someone other than Allah has knowledge of the Unseen.(47)

4. **The denial of the Divine Names and Attributes of Allah**,(48) or any part of the Revelation. This too is a denial of faith.

5. **The ignorance and misunderstanding of the important meaning of *La Ilaha Illallah*** (there is no god but Allah) or having contradictory belief to it. Such as believing that it means "nothing exists but Allah," or that it means "there is no creating Lord but Allah," or that it means "None had been worshipped but Allah." This is the belief of those who claim that the worshipping of any idol leads to the Creator, because all creation is one part in the Creator.
   The person who believes these things in ignorance is in need of instruction and guidance. In fact, the declaration of faith means that everything that is worshipped beside Allah or instead of Allah is falsehood.

6. The abandonment of ***La Ilaha Illallah*** (There is no god but Allah). That is to turn away from it, neither uttering it nor fulfilling its necessary conditions, but ignoring completely the obligations. That is failing to pray, to fast, or to pay *zakat*, or not making the pilgrimage even though there is nothing to prevent it. Nevertheless, one who does this will still rely on false wishes and expect that Allah will raise him up to the highest rank of Paradise.

7. **To be loyal to the enemies of Allah.** To put oneself, of one's own free will, under the protection of disbelievers, to subordinate oneself to them

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(47) *al-Ghaib*, the unseen or the unknown. Knowledge which Allah has revealed to no one, such as the time of the Day of Resurrection (*trans)*.
(48) *al-'Asma` wa'l-Siffat* - sometimes described as the " names and attributes of Allah." This refers to the ways that Allah has described or named Himself in the revelation (*trans*).

and to express loyalty to them while abandoning the Muslims is a kind of disbelief. Allah has said,

"***O you who have believed! Do not make allies of a people with whom Allah has become angry with***." (60:13)
Other forms of loyalty to disbelief are to seek guidance in the governance of public affairs exclusively in something other than what Allah has revealed, and the practice of the occult, including magic and fortune telling.(49)

8. **Exaggeration in religion**. This is one of the things that leads to the corruption of religious doctrines and to *shirk* (polytheism). Indeed, exaggeration and religious extremism are major sources of every *fitnah,*(50) and every deviation from the straight path.

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Keep away from exaggeration in religion, for certainly those who came before you were destroyed by exaggeration in religion,"(51) and he said, "Do not make wild claims about me, as they did about (Jesus) the son of Mary. I am only a servant of Allah, so say 'Allah's servant and His Messenger."(52) enger.

(49) The first of these, to govern by something other than what Allah has revealed, is to express loyalty to human intellect in preference to the divine wisdom of Allah, the second is to give one's loyalty to the forces of darkness, to ally oneself with the world of the unseen (*trans*).
(50) The word *fitnah* is used for different meanings.
(51) Al-Nasa'i, *Kitab al-Hajj*, 5:268.
(52) Bukhari, 6: 478.

The Signs of True Devotion (monotheism)

Among the signs of true monotheism are the following:

1. Sincere devotion to Allah: That is to devote your words, your deeds, and all of your strivings for the sake of Allah alone and for His pleasure, hoping and longing for the rewards He has promised, and fearing His punishment. Giving no regard for worldly benefit, fame, or the praise of others or any other kind of showing off or *shirk* that can wipe away a person's good deeds.

Allah said,

"***And they were not commanded except to worship Allah*** [being]***sincere to Him in religion.***"(97:5).

Just as what the Prophet ﷺ said, "Allah does not accept among the acts [of devotion] except those which are sincerely done to seek thereby Allah's pleasure."

Therefore, devotee worship *tawhid al-ibadah* is built upon sincerity.

An act of devotion can be correctly performed but be misdirected, it may lack a correct intention by not being sincerely directed toward Allah.

As a result, the false intention spoils the good deed until it becomes ugliness.

2. Judging oneself by the Law of Allah. That is to say, the sincere believer refers all things to what Allah has revealed, and takes Allah's revelation, and His law as his guide throughout his life, as the fundamental principles by which he judges all things, whether they relate to the affairs of this world or the next. Allah said,

"***And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, those are truly the disbelievers, (wrongdoers, unjust), (defiantly disobedient).***" (5:44-46)

In other words, we are to give precedence to Allah's authority, rather than to the authority of positive laws that people have imposed upon themselves, and which they are modifying every time because of its inconsistency with man's demand.

But as for Allah, it is He Who created, and it is He Who knows best what is best for its affairs. He created mankind and knows better than they what is best for them in their spiritual and material lives. Allah said,

"***Does He not know what those whom He created? And He is the Subtle, the Aware.***" (67:14)

And He said

"***The decision*** (of ruling and legislating is the right of none but) ***to Allah.***" (12:40),

and He said,

"**Is it the judgement of** ***jahiliyah*** [the time of ignorance] ***that they are seeking? But who is better judgement other than*** [the judgement of] ***Allah for a people who belief***?" (5:50)

Allah has permitted the lawful and prohibited the unlawful, and there is no other way to know the lawful and the unlawful except by way of Allah's revelation to His Messenger. We can know it through the text of the Quran and the *sunnah,* or through the rules that are derived from these texts of these two sources.

Whoever seeks other way than Allah's way, permitting what Allah has prohibited, or prohibiting what Allah has permitted, will have assigned a partner to Allah, as lawgiver, and will have sought some other law. Allah said,

"***Or have they partners*** [other than Allah] ***who made lawful for them*** (matters) ***in religion that which has not allowed***?" (42:21)

Shirk of obedience to those who Disobey Allah

One of the types of *shirk* that the Jews and the Christians fell in before is that,

"***They have taken as lords beside Allah their rabbis and their monks.***" (9:31)

This verse astonished one of the Companions, 'Adi bin Haatim, after he had accepted Islam. He had formerly been a Christian. He said, "O Messenger of Allah, we did not used to worship them." The Prophet ﷺ said "Didn't they permit what is unlawful and prohibit the lawful and you followed them?" He said, "Yes." The Prophet ﷺ said, "Doing that was to worship them." And in another narration, "They were not worshiping them, but whenever they permitted something they used to obey them in permitting it, and when they prohibited something, all prohibited it."[53]

3. **Love of Allah** this requires that we precede our love to Him above all other things, and that we give precedence to what He wants above what his creatures want and desire for themselves.

Allah said,

"***And among people are some who take apart from rivals, they love them as they*** [should] ***love Allah. But those who believed are stronger in love to Allah***" (2:165).

Our love for Allah must exceed our love for property, families, and for our parents.

Allah is true, and His way is the way of truth. How then could we possibly struggle and strive for maintaining the truth and resisting the evil if our love to the worldly things exceed that of Allah? How could we possibly make *Jihad* that may result the loss of our properties or even our souls? No one will give his soul for Allah if he loves it more than Him.

This verse denounced those, whose love for something other than Allah is like their love for Allah. How then would it be for someone who loves these things more than they love Allah? Allah said,

"***Say: If your fathers, and your sons, and your brethern, and your wives, and your tribe, and the wealth that you acquire, and merchandise for which you fear to lose, and dwellings you desire, are dearer to you than Allah and His messenger and striving in His way: then wait till Allah***

[53] [al-Tirmidhi 3094. Its *isnad* is classed as *hassan*].

brings His command to pass, for Allah guides not the defiantly disobedient." (9:24).

The Prophet ﷺ said, "When you do business in *eenah*[54] [forbidden trade], and hoard up livestock, and become content sitting in your green fields , and abandon *jihad* in the way of Allah, then Allah will send you humiliation that will not be lifted until you return to your religion."[55].

Faith is not complete until the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is more dear to a believer than his parents, and his children and indeed, all people, and not until he loves what Allah and His Messenger love: and until the believer loves his fellow believer, loving him for nothing but for the sake of Allah.

([54]) Doing business in forbidden ways. This is to sell goods to someone for a specific price while setting a time in the future for delivery, then buying back the same goods for a lower price before delivery. It is as kind of *riba*.

([55]) Abu Daud 3462, its *isnad* is *sahih*

THE NEED OF KNOWING THE ONENESS OF ALLAH (TAWHID)

Tawhid is the unalienable right of Allah upon His servants to worship Him alone, Who created them out of nothing, and who subjected to them all what is in the heavens and the earth, and showered His blessings, both seen and unseen, upon them.

Allah has taken it upon Himself to grant whoever accords Him this right the reward of Paradise.

The Prophet ﷺ once told his companion, Muadh, "Do you know the right of Allah before His servants and the right of His servants before Him?"

Muadh said, "Allah and His Messenger know best." The Prophet ﷺ said, "It is Allah's right for His servants exclusively to worship Him and not associate anything else with Him, and it is then the right of servants upon their God that He punishes not those who worship Him and none other than Him". [56]

Because it relates directly to Allah, to His Divine Names and Attributes, the science of *tawhid*, the Unity of Allah finds itself at the very center of Islamic learning and the most honorable knowledge to be sought. Indeed, Allah called all the prophets to teach the sublime and indivisible Unity of the Creator.

> "***We sent never a Messenger before you except that We revealed to him that 'There is no deity but Me; so worship Me.'***" (21:25)

Knowledge of *tawhid* is obligatory for every Muslim since the correctness of a person's religion depends on the correctness of the things he believes in.

Allah has forbidden all that worship others than Him from entering Paradise, and will not allow anyone who worships Him alone – even when he may enter Hell - to abide eternally in it.

Therefore, our need for a correct understanding of the absolute oneness of Allah is greater even than our need for food and water.

If losing food and water means the loss of the means of living, losing the knowledge of the oneness of God means the loss of the elements of everlasting happiness in this world and in the next.

Losing the issue of *tawhid* means losing the essence of happiness in this world and in the next to come, and then losing the perfect security of the soul at peace with the One.

For the true guarantee for tomorrow's salvation is worship the Creator alone through His way, without mediators between.

Tawhid is the right of Allah upon you, and Paradise is the promise of Allah for whosoever implements *tawhid*.

The human heart can find no rest except in communion with its Lord, in drawing near to Him and to what pleases Him and in shunning what displeases Him.

([56]) Bukhari, (7373).

There can be no goodness but *tawhid* is its root, and there is no evil, in this world or the next, but *shirk* is its root and no calamity or difficulty, but can be released by *tawhid* and its testimony.

Jonah was saved by the word of *tawhid* (uttering a confirmation) of God's oneness when he called out from the belly of the whale saying,

> "***There is no god but You, Glory be to You, I have been indeed of those wrongdoers.***" (21:87)

Allah also said,

> "***Had he not been of those who exalt Allah*** [in remembrance] ***He would have remained inside its belly until the day they are resurrected.***" (37:144)

The Prophet ﷺ was asked: "Is this salvation of that word special for Jonah or it is for every Muslim? He replied, "It is for every Muslim." (Tabari V. 17 P. 65)

Allah, has made this word *La Ilaha Illallah (*There is no God but Allah) a word of salvation and deliverance from every calamity, a key to Islam in this life, and the key to Paradise tomorrow.

Two Valuable Rules

The Qur'an gives us two important rules as a condition for worship to be accepted. Allah said,

> "***So whoever would hope for the meeting of his Lord, then let him do righteous deed and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone.***" (18:110)

This verse indicates two conditions for our worship to be acceptable:

The first is that our intention must be pure so that one does "not associate in the worship of his Lord anything." The Prophet ﷺ said, "Allah accepts no act that is not purely for His sake, done out of longing for His presence."(57) It is not a question of someone's act of worship simply being rejected if he associates another with Allah in it. Indeed, if this is the case, all of his previous deeds will be cast down:

> "***And We will come to what they have done of deeds and make them as dust dispersed*** **(**unaccepted**).**" (25:23)

And man will be punished for the deeds he did with impure intentions. For Allah does not see appearances only, but He sees his heart, and He knows the pure heart from the corrupt.

Once al-Fadil b. Iyad recited the verse:

> "***It is He Who has created death and life to test you, which of you is best in deed.***" (67:2)

Then he said, "the best of deeds is the most sincere one, and the most correct."

Someone asked him, "What do you mean to say?"

He said, "The act (of worship) if it is not done sincerely, will not be accepted. And if is not done correctly, will not be accepted. And none of the deeds will ever be accepted unless they are sincere and correct.

To be sincere means: to worship Allah for His sake and pleasure only.

To be correct means to worship Allah according His Book and the S*unnah* of His Prophet.

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(57) Al-Nisa'i, (59).

The consequence of Insincerity

Abu Hurraira related a *hadith* in which the Prophet ﷺ said, “The first people who will be consumed by the fire are three**:**

A scholar who has learned the Qur’an by heart.

A m*ujahid* (soldier for Allah) who was killed in the path of Allah.

And a very rich man.

The first to be called to account will be the reciter of the Qur’an. Allah will ask him, “Did I not teach you what I sent down to My Messenger?” He will say, “Yes, My Lord.” And Allah will ask him, “What did you do with this?” He will say, “I used to stand reciting by night and by day, hoping for Your reward.”

Allah will say, “You lied,” and the Angels will say, “You lied,” and then Allah will say, “But you only wanted for people to say, so and so is a reciter of the Qur’an. And they had already said it. Take him to Hell.”

Then the rich man will be brought and Allah will ask him, “Was I not generous to you to the point that you were not in need of anyone?”

He will say, “Yes, My Lord.” Allah will ask him, “So what did you do with what I gave you?”

“My Lord, You provided me with wealth, and I spent it on the poor, hoping for Your reward and for Paradise.” Allah will say, “You lied.” And the Angels will say, “You lied.” Allah will say, “Rather, you wanted them to say that so and so is a generous man. And that is what they said. Take him to Hell.”

Then the man who was killed in the path of Allah will be brought. Allah will ask him, “Why were you killed?” He will say, “My Lord, I went out to battle for Your sake and I fought the enemy until I was killed, hoping for Your reward and for Paradise.” Allah will say, “You lied.” And the Angels will say, “You lied.” Then Allah will say, “Rather, you fought so that people would say so and so is a brave man, and that is what they said. Now take him to Hell.”

Then the Messenger of Allah, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said, “O Abu Hurraira, these are the first three of Allah’s creations whom Hell will begin to burn on the Day of Resurrection.”[58]

These are the two main pillars of *tawhid:* Islam is the worship of Allah in the light of the Qur’an and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet ﷺ. Whoever acts upon these two things and absolves himself of associating anything with Him, and absolves himself of innovation in religion will find success.

The two main dangers facing this Nation have always been *shirk*, associating something else with Allah, and *bid’a*, innovating in religion by trying to worship Allah by doing things that the Prophet ﷺ did not teach us to do.

([58]) Tirmidhi; al-Hakim, 3/111.

BELIEF IN ALLAH

***<u>Is there a need to prove His existence</u>*?**

Allah is the Lord and Creator, the Provider, the Bringer of Life and Death. This is obvious and requires no evidence. The processes of creation, of sustaining the universe, of Divine Dominion and Action in the world are in the hands of Allah; no part of creation shares in any of this. Such belief is firmly rooted in the nature of human beings.

Human nature bears witness to the existence of Allah, as the Qur'an points out in the story of Pharaoh and his people:

> "***And they denied them*** [the signs of Allah] ***while their souls acknowledged them out of injustice and haughtiness. So see how was the end of the corrupters!*** " (27:14)

Just as when Pharaoh demanded Moses with pride and arrogance, "What is the Lord of the Worlds?" Moses simply told him,

> " ***You have already known that none has sent down these*** [signs] ***except the Lord of the Heavens and the Earth as proofs.*** " (17:102)

Likewise, the prophets called, first of all, for the worship of Allah, saying,

> " ***Worship your Lord, you have for you no other god than He***."

If this needed any other proof than that which one could find in his own heart, then the prophets would have sought to support their assertion, by calling people to believe in the existence of Allah and then beginning to teach them the means of worshipping Him, but they did not do that. Rather, they began with the subject of worship.

When an Arab tribesman was asked to prove the existence of Allah, he said, “Glory be to Allah! The Camel’s dung means there were camels that passed by, and footprints show you there is a trail. So the heavens with its mansions of the stars, and the earth with its lofty heights, does this not point to the All-Knowing, the All-Aware?”

Reason also tells us that the existence of all that is, is evidence of a Creator. There is no created thing without a creator, which brought it out of nothingness, and into being. Nothing could have created itself. Something must have formed it out of nothingness. Therefore, the existence of these things is itself evidence of the existence of the Creator. The Almighty said,

> “***Or were they created of nothing, or were they themselves the creators***?” (52:35).

Indeed, the evidence is as the Almighty has said,

> “***And*** [the proof is with] ***in your own selves. Don’t you then see***?” (51:21)

Is not the fruit of the womb a sign of Allah? Are not blood vessels and arteries and hearts, fingerprints never the same from one person to another, are not these also signs of the supreme Creator? But in comparison to this enormous universe which Allah has created, we are only a very small sign, as Allah said:

> “***The creation of the heavens and the earth is greater than the creation of mankind, but most of mankind know not***” (40:57).

IJTIHAD[59] AND *TAQLEED*

After *shirk* and innovation, the most common way that people spoil their faith is by blindly following tradition. Just as those who deny the worship of the Messiah are accused of being enemies of Christ, and those who deny the exaggerations of the Shias with respect to the Imams are accused of being enemies of the Household of Muhammad ﷺ and those who deny the worshipping of the graves of the pious and righteous are accused of being enemies of the pious and the righteous, so those who oppose the blind following of tradition are accused of being enemies of the four Imams who would scrap their *madhhabs*[60] entirely.

Two good examples

The First Example: Imagine if a man who went to his doctor and the doctor said to him "You are infected with cancer.

Then he went to another doctor, who said, "You have no cancer.

What would he do? Would he risk himself and choose the first because he does not like to be told that?

Should he say: I would prefer to take the word of the second doctor because the first claimed that I am sick, while the second said I am all right and I do not like to be told I am sick.

Or would he try to find out more and then take the advice of the doctor whose opinion was closest to the truth?

And if each of them prescribed different medicine for him, would he stick with the doctor whose medicine was cheaper and easier to find? Or would he make his own inquiries, and that do not require him to be a doctor?

Why don't we do the same when we are confronted in the matter of religion by a contradiction between two schools of jurisprudence? If we are truly as vigilant for our welfare in the Hereafter as we are vigilant for our health, we will choose for ourselves that which appears to be the closest to the truth and the most correct.

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(59) *Ijtihad* means to exert one's effort by reasoning to differentiate right from wrong when no clear evidance could be obtained from the Quran or the Sunnah.
Another definition: the reasoning process by which Islamic laws are deduced after thorough research

(60) *Madh-hab*: Is a school of thought whether legal or philosophical.

Reasonable Questions to Ask

1. If blindly following (*taqleed*) of the scholars is obligatory, why then were they all reported to have said, “Do not imitate us”?

1. Did the scholars (Imams) to whom the four schools of jurisprudence are attributed really intend to found systems of jurisprudence which others after them would blindly follow, or did they rather devote themselves to the service of truth in the knowledge that they would sometimes be right and sometimes be wrong?

2. Did they enable those who come after them to take up this work where they left off and continue to search out the rulings and the opinions that were closest to truth with full fairness and without bigotry?

3. Are the thoughts of the four schools free from any error? If each is free from error, then why do we have four different *madh-habs* today?

4. When the four Imams disagree about a matter, then we know that the truth should most likely be with one of them, not all of them.

5. When we disagree about a matter, we should go to them, but when they themselves disagree among themselves do they go to other Imams or do they return to the Book of Allah and the *sunnah*? And do not forget that the scholars ordered us intensively to do the same, and not to follow blindly, saying, “Do not imitate us, and when you find our words contradicting the *sunnah* of the Prophet, then throw away our words and stick to the Book of Allah and to the *sunnah* of His Prophet.

6. Did these Imams used to be angry with anyone who sought to distinguish the most predominant opinion among the four opinions of theirs, or did their flexibility, their understanding and broad-mindedness make them accept it? They were in fact endowed with tolerance and understanding which we seem to have lost today.

7. If a non-Muslim converted to Islam, what Imam should we order him to follow? Would not it be shameful to tell him that he should be selecting one of the four Imams and to follow blindly what *madh-habs* imposes? Would that be counted as an Islamic way of searching for truth? Would that give a good reputation to Islam? Is it an Islamic way to follow a person in everything, whether correct or incorrect? Is this fitting for the Muslims, the bearers of truth to the world, the bearers of the light of knowledge to the East and West to retreat to the darkness of ignorance?

The Second Example: Imagine what it would be like if people became so obsessed with the inventor of the first car (Ford) and believed that his design was perfect and no one can come after him and dare to suggest any modification or development, or he will be considered an enemy to the first inventor.

Imagine if they did not allow anyone to change the original design in any way, and insisted that to do so would be an insult and injury against its designer and an arrogant assertion of one's superiority to him. If this had happened we would still be chugging along today in eighty-year-old Model-T Fords, without any refinements.

The work of the scholars who came before us is not a revelation that must never be questioned or changed, and never be challenged. Indeed, to refine their work is a step toward the better, especially when we know that each *madh-hab* is not free of wrong decisions or verdicts (*fatwa*) simply because no matter how high degree of knowledge the scholar has, he is still a human being capable of making mistakes.

We must not become rigid, considering the words of the *imams* final and set in stone forever. If we did this then, what would be the difference between us and those who assert that their Imams (leaders of religion) are sinless and that any one who objects or opposes their Imams is opposing Allah? They believe that their Imams are infallible. This fanaticism goes against the methodology of the Imams al-Shafi'i, Abu Hanifa, Malik and Ahmad.

The Imams were always committed to the truth. They would revise their opinions when it became clear that the truth lay elsewhere. They did not care if any ignorant person accused them of contradicting themselves, because for them it was easier to be blamed by people today than to be blamed tomorrow by Allah, and because the point was that truth is worthier to be followed than men, unlike those who came after them and made men worthier than truth to be followed.

Abu Hanifa said, "We are people who say something today and contradict it tomorrow." He meant that if it became clear that they were wrong, they would not hesitate to change their views.

The Imams were so dedicated to the truth and not to anything else, that you find Imam Al-Shafii said "I have never debated someone but I wished that Allah shows the truth through him."

Therefore, those who warn against blindly following them are not denying the great remarkable work of these Imams, in fact, they are only warning people against something the Imams themselves warned us about. They used to say, "Do not imitate us."

We must be grateful to their remarkable work; we need to know their views, thoughts and understanding of the Qur'an and the *sunnah,* to investigate the truth among the four thoughts they have offered.

But we should not place their systems of jurisprudence and their *fatwas* above the Book of Allah and the *sunnah* of His Messenger. We should not judge our differences by their words rather than by the Book of Allah and the *Sunna* of His Messenger. This is the blind imitation of which they all warned us.

Furthermore, who is he to claim that the schools of jurisprudence were four? Whoever thinks that he is mistaken. Al-Thawri had his system of jurisprudence, as did al-Awza'i, and Ibn Hazm. But although these no longer have any following, nevertheless they had followers before.

We know that the word "*shafi'I*" means one who follows the *madh-hab* and the methods of Imam al-Shafi'i. But what was the *madh-hab* which Imam al-Shafi'i followed? Was al-Shafi'i a follower of Shafi'i? Was Abu Hanifa a follower of Hanafi? Was Malik a follower of Maliki? Was Ahmad a Hanbali follower?

Well, let us hear their declaration of methodology. They all said, "If the *hadith* is *sahih* (authentically narrated), then that is my way "*madh-hab*."(61) The authentic report of the Prophet is what I follow, in other word, The Prophet way is my "*madh-hab*."

Al-Muzani, reported that Imam Shafi'i said, "If you find anything in my book that contradicts the *sunnah* of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ then follow the *Sunna* and leave what I said aside, and do not imitate." And he also said, "All Muslims agreed, that when the *Sunna* of the Messenger of Allah is clear, no one may leave it for the opinion of anyone else."(62)

The blind follower is the one who really does disservice to the methods of the Imams, for he is the one who is in fact not following the *madh-hab*. People have taken the Imams as icons which they blindly follow. They follow everything they said except for this: "Do not follow us blindly".

Blind following is negative, a sort of training to limit or dwarf or incapacitate the mind of a person till he becomes unconcerned with proof or evidence for a position. He has an emotional attachment to a personality. He will not claim that his "Imam" is infallible, but his actions prove that this is what he truly believes.

It is well known that the *ijtihads* of the Imams produced contradictory positions. Some would say that such and such a thing is permitted and others would say that is forbidden. And don't be surprised when you find that correct positions on various issues are distributed among the various *madh-habs*. On one matter al-Shafi'i is right, and on another Abu Hanifa is right. Sometimes Malik is right and sometimes Ahmad, and so on and so forth. None of them is always right.

If they disagree among one another, then what should we be doing? Should we then use a referendum to select one of the four different decisions?

We must return to the Book of Allah and the *sunnah* of His Prophet ﷺ.
Allah said,

> "***And if you disagree over anything among you, then refer it to Allah and the Messenger if you*** [truly] ***believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is better way and better result."*** (4:59)

Despite their gifts and their knowledge, the Imams are human beings and are not infallible. They have limits like all people do. Knowledge encompasses men but no man encompasses all knowledge.

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(61) See Al-intiqaa P. 145 For Ibn Abdil-bir. *Almeezan* P. 1:62 for Ash-sharani. *Almajmou* for Annawawi 1:63. *Al-hilyah* for Abuno-aim 9:106-107 .

(62) *Siyar al-a'lam* 10/33 *Adab al-Shafi'i wa manaqibihi*, 69.

The Hanafis may think that following al-Shafi'i is an insult to Abu Hanifa. And the Malikis may think that someone who follows Imam Ahmad is insulting Malik. But the person who searches for truth has the advantage of all of them and knows that none of them has a monopoly on truth.

TheIR DIffer is OUR TEST

Allah tries the extent of our sincerity and our commitment to truth by the errors and the disagreements of our scholars. Their disagreements are a source of *fitnah* (test) for us; Allah tests us as He has tested those before us.

Ammar b. Yasir said (on the day Aisha took up arms against Ali, being wrong in her action), "By Allah she is the wife of your Prophet in this world and the next. But Allah is testing you with her to disclose whether you obey Him or her."[(63)]

Why then should we not be tested with scholars like Ahmad, and al-Shafi'i, and Malik, and Abu Hanifa? These enormously gifted men had struggled with many issues and discovered right answers and proposed wrong ones, and they will be rewarded even for their mistakes[(64)].

But the blind follower, who follows an error and knows that it is an error, is blameworthy and will not be excused.

It is true that the scholar who struggles to find the truth and makes an error will be rewarded for his effort. But the follower who stubbornly insists upon following a particular scholar's opinion will not be rewarded for his stubbornness. Especially when his error is pointed out to him and he is given proof from the Book of Allah and the *sunnah* and he still insists and puffs himself up and pretends he did not hear anything. His argument is always the same, "Do you think my Imam did not know this?"

This is not to say that no one should follow a *madh-hab* or the opinions of any particular scholar, placing his faith in his confidence of the master. What it means is that such following should be conditional. When it becomes apparent that truth lies other than in the *madh-hab* on any particular issue, then he should abandon the position of the *madh-hab* on that particular issue alone and follow the truth wherever it is.

If a follower of Imam Ahmad discovers that Imam Ahmad's opinion on a particular matter is wrong and that Imam al-Shafi'i's view is closer to the truth, then he must go with al-Shafi'i on that matter, not Ahmad. That is not to say that he may not follow Ahmad's opinions on any other matter.

If a follower of al-Shafi'i, for instance, places his confidence in this *madh-hab* and he is not aware of any error in the Imam's reasoning on any particular issue, then he may not be blamed for following him, even if in this case he is incorrect.

It is permissible for an ordinary person to follow any *madh-hab* he likes if he is not capable of discovering knowledge for himself, or if he is illiterate, but he must not

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([63]) Bukhari, 7100.

([64]) The scholar has the right to try his best with the knowledge he has to search for the truth. Therefore, only he is rewarded for that even if he was mistaken, and those who have no knowledge are not rewarded if they speak without knowledge. The Prophet said, "The scholar who makes a reasoned decision (*ijtihad*) and is correct will receive two rewards, while he who does so and is incorrect will receive one reward".

become fanatical about the opinions of his *madh-hab* when it is made clear to him that a more correct position lies elsewhere. It is due on those educated men of religion to inform the ordinary persons of this fact.

Then, there is no harm done when ordinary believers innocently follow a wrong opinion of one of their Imams, so long as they are not aware of it, and so long as their intention is to place the word of Allah and His Messenger above that of the *madh-hab* and the Imam. If not, then they will become like those who said,

> "***And when it is said to them, 'Follow what Allah has revealed,' they say, 'We rather follow what we found our fathers doing.' What if their fathers had no sense in anything and were not guided right?***" (2:170)

Fanaticism for *Madhhabs*

Fanaticism for *madh-habs* has become such that in a single village you can find four judges and four *muftis*, a pair for the Shafi'is and a pair for the Malikis and a pair for the Hanifis and a pair for the Hanbalis.

This has been the misfortune of the Muslim world. Each has his own Imam whom he follows in matters of *fiqh* and *aqeeda*. And in every town you will find four judges, each judging according to his *madhhab*. And in the mosque you will find four Imams, each leading the prayer for the followers of his *madhhab.*

The Muslims have begun to regard their *madhhabs* as kinds of political parties, denouncing followers of rival ones before all else. And blind following has taken a geographical form, in other words, tell me where you are from, I can tell you your *madh-hab.*

If someone is from Morocco, then he is certainly a Maliki and if someone is from India, then he will be a Hanafi. It is impossible to imagine a Pakistani Maliki or a Hanbali Moroccan.

If Imam al-Shafi'i were to be brought back to witness the fanaticism that people have entered upon in his name, he would surely denounce them all.

Fanaticism is not a characteristic of the true faith

It is not fitting for Muslims, the bearers of truth and knowledge to the world, to fall victim to the disease of blindly following traditions, for which Allah criticized the nations:

> “***And when it is said to them, ‘Follow what Allah has revealed,’ they say, "Rather we follow what we found our fathers doing.’ Even though their fathers were understanding nothing, nor they were guided right?***” (2:170)

And in another verse,

> “***And when it is said to them, "Come to what Allah has sent down and to the Messenger, they say, “It is enough for us what we found our forefathers doing.” What! Even though their forefathers knew nothing nor were they guided.”*** (5:104)

This is not a thing that one should find among the nation that was brought out of humanity by truth, guidance and light. We should not find among them people who say to the Imams of the *madh-habs,* “We hear and we obey,” and to the Qur’an and the *sunnah*, “We hear and we disobey.”

Ibn Abbas denounced people who opposed the *sunnah* quoting support from Abu Bakr and Omar saying, “Would that stones fell upon you from Heaven! I tell you what Allah says and what the Prophet ﷺ says, and you tell me, ‘Abu Bakr says and Omar says!’”

Did not Abu Bakr himself say, “Obey me so long as I obey Allah among you, and if I disobey Him, then you must not obey.”[65] This is sufficient to demonstrate that they were searching for the truth and for the *sunnah*.

([65]) See book Albidayah Wannihayah V. 5 P. 248.

When following tradition is permitted

There can be no doubt but that the scholars of the past have made a tremendous effort to clarify and organize all kinds of issues that are still relevant to us today, and that they left for us the fruits of their efforts and study. Each of them had his evidence and proof to support his positions and did the best that he could for us to choose the right evidence and the strongest support. All that is required of us is to examine their efforts and to compare their evidence, one against the other, and then choose that which is strongest. It is manifestly wrong for us to consider their opinions as final and beyond all examination and all criticism.

Our *hadith* sources have now been thoroughly examined and sifted through in a way that was not easily done before. We should not forget that the legal rulings of scholars are closely bound to these sources and depend upon the correctness of *hadith* or weakness in these accounts. It is well known that Abu Hanifa used the *hadith*, “There is no usury [*riba*] between a Muslim and a disbelieving enemy,” to support his ruling to permit *riba* bearing transactions between Muslims and disbelievers. He was not aware that this *hadith* account is not correct. It is certain that he would have revised his ruling had he known this, following the instructions of the Prophet ﷺ.

Imam Shafi’i decided that if someone touches his wife or a non-related woman, he loses the validity of his ablution, while it was reported correctly that the Prophet ﷺ used to perform his ablution, then kiss his wife, then go to the mosque to pray. What should we do in this case? Should we leave what the Prophet ﷺ did and hold what Shafi’i said, would Shafi’I be pleased with this?

Those Whom Allah Protects—*Awlia*

Who are the *awlia*[66] of Allah?
Who are the most praiseworthy among them?
How they may be recognized?
Should we confirm that they are *awlia* of Allah, and how can we become one of them?

The central idea of *awlia* is one of love and proximity (closeness). It is the opposite of enmity, which depends upon dislike and distance.

Wali is a person who is near to Allah and beloved by Him and is someone who fits the description Allah has given of such a person: someone who believes and who fears Allah. Allah said,

> "**Surely*, the allies of Allah, there will be no fear on them, nor shall they grieve.
> Those who believed, and used to fear (Allah).
> For them are good tidings in the present life and in the Hereafter.
> There is no changing in the words of Allah, that is the great success*".** (10:62)

Belief and fear of Allah are both characteristics of such a person.

The matter of *al-wilaya* and *wali* (one who is near to Allah) had been the source of much confusion and misguidance among people.

These ideas have been taken up by the *Sufi's* who made the *wali* the cornerstone of their religion, much in the same way as the *Shias* do to their Imams, and they both claim infallibility for them. Both groups make fanatical claims and this is one such claim they share.

Sufis have made use of the matter of *wali,* creating among them corruption in faith and false imaginations that the *wali* of Allah is something other than what our faith teaches us about him. They have twisted ideas and the beliefs of the people to the point that they begin to believe in whoever was reputed to be a *wali* of Allah, even if they see in him what is against the *wilaayah* (friendship) to Allah, and contradicts what anyone would expect of such a person. The *Sufis* duped people into thinking that a *wali* could outwardly live in contradiction to Allah's *shariah*, yet be obedient to it inwardly.

From this perspective some people began to think that the *wali* occupied an intermediary position between themselves and Allah, and that they could ask him to approach Allah on their behalf; they even would ask him for things which one should never ask of anyone but Allah.

They wrongly think that only prostrating to the grave is *shirk*.

They wrongly think also that so long as they believe that Allah is One Creator, and they do not prostrate themselves before idols or graves, but they only go to graves and ask the deads to intercede with Allah on their behalf, they are still monotheists.

([66]) The *wali* of Allah is the one who is close to Allah and beloved of Him. *awlia* is the plural.

It escapes them that the first *mushriks* used to believe that Allah alone created the heavens and earth, but they used to ask the idols that they had fashioned in the image of their righteous men to help them approach nearer to Allah.

The Qur'an explains this truth:

> "***And those who have taken for themselves allies*** [protectors] ***besides Him*** [say], "***We only worship them that they may bring us nearer to Allah.***" (39:3)

And He said,

> "***Those whom you invoke apart from Allah are servants like you; so call them and let them respond to you, if you are truthful.***" (7:194)

Allah said "***Those whom you invoke***" He did not say "**Those whom you prostrate to**" which proves that they used to worship human beings who died and whose graves were taken as places of worship.

Glorifying Graves and Exaggerating about the Righteous men is the Origin of the first age of ignorance (*jahiliyya)*

Many are those whose ignorance ensnares them in the diabolic trap that caused the first of mankind to associate others with Allah. Ibn Abbas explained the verse:

> "***And they have said, `Do not ever leave your gods. And never leave Wadd, nor Sowâ_ nor Yaghûth and Ya_ûq nor Nasr.***"[(67)] (71:23)

> He said, "These were the names of some of the righteous men from among Noah's people. When they died, people put up statues and other images of them."

Al-Tabari said in his explanation book of Qur'an *tafsir* that Ya'uq and Nasr were righteous men. They each had followers, and when they died their companions decided to make images of them to remind them of their leaders and encourage them to worship [Allah]. Others followed after them when they died and Satan deceived them into thinking that those who made the images used to worship them, and Allah sends the rain to people in their honor. So they worshipped them.[(68)]

It is quite clear from this that the origin of *shirk* began in the glorification of graves. Satan uses the graves of the righteous to delude mankind and urges men to venerate the burial places of their predecessors, and he urges man to denounce any who speak out against this and to accuse them of insulting the reputation of these righteous men. This is a corruption in belief in the oneness of Allah, and a return to the ancient Ignorance that Allah revealed many verses to stop.

([67])These five were idols of the pagan Arabs.

([68]) Tabari, 12/29, 62.

Just consider the following *verse*.

"***Those whom you call upon besides Allah are servants like you. So call upon them, and let them respond to you, if you are true!***" (7:194)

If you invoke them, they do not hear your supplication, and if they heard, they would not respond to you, and on the Day of Judgement, they will deny your association. And no one can inform you like One who is well aware. (35:14)

And who is more astray than he who invokes apart from Allah some one that never respond to him until the Day of Judgement, and they were unaware of their invocation and [They will be] ***when people are gathered, they will become enemies with them, and they will reject their worship*** [They used to address to them]" (46:4)

The Truth about *al-Tawassul*

Tawassul means to do something that will make you nearer to Allah. Allah said,

"***O You who believe, fear Allah, and seek the means*** [of nearness] [*waseelah*] ***to Him, and strive in His cause that you may succeed.***" (5:35)

It means, "to draw nearer to Allah by obeying Him, and doing the good work which pleases Him." That is how Ibn Abbas and other companions of the Prophet ﷺ explained the term (*waseelah*) in the verse.

Nevertheless, others continue to use the word *tawassul* in a completely different sense. For them this means seeking the aid of someone other than Allah. It means to offer supplication to someone other than Allah, to fulfill some need or to save them from some misfortune.

Hence, the same false and pagan concept of people in the *Jahiliyya* returned to take place among some people of our nation (*Ummah*). Those pagans used to say,

"***We only worship them that they may bring us nearer to Allah.***" (39:3)

Those who corrupt the beliefs of people and then corrupt their behavior, obscure the link between man and his actions, and it was this link between deeds and belief that Allah stressed in the Qur'an saying,

"[It is He] ***Who created life and death to test which of you is best in deed.***" (67:2)

Rather, they tie themselves to the personalities of prophets and to righteous men, and try to insure their salvation by those who are near to Allah.

The thieves steal, the fornicators fornicate, drunkards drink their fill of alcohol. After that, they all come to the shrine of [saints] and throw some money at their graves or images so that something may happen in favor of them or that they may be forgiven for some offense, then they hope by that to solve their problem, and to ensure forgiveness and salvation.

In other words, they do every evil and they leave the matter with the saints to solve for them with their God. How nice that would be if it were true!

As a result of this, entire generations have been diverted from their faith. It is enough to visit the shrine of the righteous *wali* at the end of the week, or at the end of the month, or year, to ask him to seek Allah's forgiveness for whatever they may have done. They will cry a little when they arrive at the shrine. Humility overcomes them at the shrine but does not intrude upon their prayers, if they pray at all. Then they go back to their lives, doing as they have always done, turning away from Allah, depending on people for salvation instead of doing righteous deeds, and being themselves righteous as Allah created for them. This way drove people far far away from religion and stuck them deeply in sin and corruption.

These confused ideas about *awlia* among Muslims have come to resemble the notions of the Christians with regard to saints. When Muslims build places of worship upon graves, they resemble the Christians and the Jews who built seminaries and

monasteries over the tombs of their saints. The Prophet ﷺ said, “Allah cursed the Jews and the Christians, who took the graves of their prophets and their righteous men as places of worship.”[69]

([69]) Bukhari 3453 and Muslim 321.

TYPES OF LEGAL *tawassul*

Human beings by nature seek all means to what benefits them, and seek all means to avoid hardship. If your child is sick, then you call a doctor, who will examine him and prescribe a course of treatment. This is a legal means of *tawassul* that Islam permits.

But if you visit a dead doctor at his grave and ask him to cure your child, or seek the assistance of an impostor or a faith-healer—a person who is ignorant of medicine and ignorant of religion and who depends upon demonic deception—is to violate the law which Allah revealed to His Prophet ﷺ. Then this is an illegal means of *tawasul.*

If you buy the doctor's prescription and give it to your son to drink, then this is a legal means (*tawasul*)*,* while if you take it and hang it on his neck as a charm, this means (*tawasul*) is illegal.

The forms of permitted *tawassul*

THE FORMS OF PERMITTED *TAWASSUL* ARE:

1) *TAWASSUL* TO ALLAH, CALLING UPON HIM BY HIS MOST EXCELLENT NAMES AND ATTRIBUTES. ALLAH SAID,

"***To Allah belongs the beautiful names. So call Him by them.*"** (7:180)

Like saying "Oh Allah, I ask You by Your most excellent names to forgive me my sins."

2) *Tawassul* to Allah, calling upon Him by His greatest Names, as was related in the *hadith* of Boraida, who said that the Prophet ﷺ heard a man calling upon Allah saying, "Oh Allah, I call upon You by bearing witness that You are Allah of Whom there is no god but You, the One, the Eternal and Absolute, Who begets not and was not begotten, and there is none like unto Him, that You forgive me my sins." The Prophet ﷺ said, "By [Allah] the One in Whose hand is my soul, he has asked Allah by His greatest Names, by which anyone who calls upon Him will receive that for which he has asked."(70)

3) *Tawassul* to Allah by one's faith and good works. The evidence for this is the story of three men from among the Israelites(71) who once went into a cave and found the exit blocked by a great stone. They began to call upon Allah, mentioning the best of their deeds and asking Him to remove the stone, and the stone was moved. [Narrated by Bukhari 5974].

The evidence for *tawassul* by one's faith, from the Qur'an, is:

"***Those who say, 'Our Lord, we have believed, so forgive us our sins and guard us from the punishment of Hellfire.'***" (3:16)

It is permitted to seek *tawassul* to Allah with faith since faith in Allah and His Messenger is the most excellent deed in the sight of Allah. A man once asked the Prophet ﷺ "What is the most excellent deed in the sight of Allah." And he said, "Faith in Allah and His Messenger."(72)

These are the types of *tawassul* which, the scholars agree, are permitted in Islam.

Allah has made for us legal ways of *tawassul* which should be enough for us to seek, rather than seeking it in ways for which we do not have solid evidence, or for which the evidence we have is weak. Weak evidence is insufficient to support a ruling, and we should not busy ourselves with arguments over forms of *tawassul* which are not clearly supported by those of *tawasul* which are supported by the Qur'an and the *sunnah*.

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(70) Tirmidhi (3471), Abu Da'ud (1493).

(71) Bukhari 2272.

(72) Bukhari and Muslim.

The MiRaCLeS OF honor for THE RIGHTEOUS
kARAAMAAT OF *Awlia*

Karaamah of *awlia* means the extra ordinary works that Allah supports His righteous people with, as a sign of honor to them.

Satan uses another trap, that is the super works of *awlia*, in order to deceive the people with.

Satan does things which normally are not within the power of humans to do, such as appearing in an image of a dead righteous man to make people think that this is an honor *karaamah* from Allah given to that righteous, which becomes to them a sign that he is a *wali*, close to Allah and beloved of Him. Finally, they make a shrine for him or build a mosque upon his grave and they ask him apart from Allah to draw them nearer to Him.

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Perhaps a true *karaamah* may occur to a *wali* as an honor to him. But it should not be used as an excuse to ask him apart from Allah, because the most honorable one among the sons of Adam [Muhammad] said, “If you ask, ask Allah, and if you seek help, seek help from Allah.”[73].

The scholars have warned us against this trap of Satan. It is reported that Imam al-Shafi’i said, “If you see someone flying through the air or walking on water, don’t believe him nor be deceived by him, until you find out about his commitment to the laws of Islam.”

The scholars stress that Allah’s support and guidance in following of the *sunnah* and avoiding *bid’a*, and the sincere worship to Allah is the greatest *karaamah*. They said, “There is no greater divine favor than the favor of faith and of following the *sunnah*. Whoever is given that favor and then seeks a different favor is a liar and a cheater.”

([73]) Tirmidhi Hadith No. 2518 Authentic.

None of the first generations of the Muslims, (the Companions of the Prophet) nor of those who followed after them used to expose his *karaamah* before the common people in the streets the way that some people do today. Those people are in fact deforming the truth about *karaamah.* Why not they use their *karaamah* at the battlefields against the enemies of believers if they possess such favors? But truth is witness that such people are in fact as little concerned as possible with the affairs of the Muslims.

As for the alleged "miracles" that others perform, such as sticking skewers into their bodies and other tricks performed by shamans and magicians, or claiming to know the future such as soothsayers and fortune-tellers do, these are not divine favors, rather they are perversions and evidence of being in league with the devils.

Some people speak to a devil, while thinking that he is an angel who has come to him with news of the unseen. That is why Bin Mas'ud, (a Companion) mentioned this saying: "The devil takes the form of a man and comes to people telling them lies and then leaves." Later someone will say, I heard a man whom I know but don't remember his name saying so and so…etc"[(74)]

The *Mu'tazalites* [(75)]categorically denied all kinds of *karaamahs.* This was an extreme reaction against the exaggerations of the Sufis, who often told tales of strange miracles. It would have been better for them to solve the problem of these Sufis in a way that does not lead to an opposite extreme.

Then other people came after them who agreed to confirm the existence of *karaamah*, but they made a weak distinction between miracles of the prophets and the magic of the sorcerers, which led them to another sort of distortion of the truth.[(76)]

There is no doubt that the prophets performed miracles, such as splitting the moon and turning a staff into a snake. These were greater than any *karaamah* performed by the *awlia*.

The prophets have the Major Signs (*alaayatul-kubra*) while the *awlia* have the Minor Signs.

In fact, the Minor Signs are themselves a proof that our Prophet's prophethood is true. But it is false to say that what was a miracle to a prophet possibly may happen to a righteous one as a *karaamah* because revealing the Qur'an to our Prophet ﷺ was a miracle, while a *wali* could never claim to be given revelation similar to the Prophet ﷺ.

([74]) Muslim, 5.

([75]) *Mu'tazalites,* followers of the philosophical school of thought commonly called rationalism. They deny Allah's attributes by giving them false meanings.

([76]) For further information on the subject see, *Awlia Allah bayn al-mafhum al-sufi wa bayn al-minhaj al-sunni*, 118.

What is the Purpose of *Karaamah?*

There are, of course, reasons for a person being given *karaamah,* and an act of *karaamah* is not something that a person is able to perform whenever he likes. *Karaamah* has a noble purpose. It is to defend religion and preserve and protect the *sunnah*. It is to support what the Prophet ﷺ brought to us. Allah allows it to happen by the hand of a pious servant of Him, who is a follower of our Prophet's *sunnah*, and who detests *bid'a*.

An example of this is an incident that happened to Abu Muslim al-Khaulani. A person known as al-Aswad al-'Anasi once asked Abu Muslim, "Do you bear witness that I am the Messenger of Allah?" He said, "I do not." Al-'Anasi then asked him, "Do you bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah?" Abu Muslim said, "Yes." Al-'Anasi then threw him into a fire which Allah made cold and a safe place for him.(77)

This favor of *karaamah* had benefited the Muslims and it had a most positive effect, for it disproved the false claim of al-'Anasi to the prophethood and confirmed that Muhammad ﷺ was the last of the prophets. This is an example of a real *karaamah* which confirmed that Abu Muslim was a *wali* of Allah and which happened before a despot and a disbeliever who attempted by his false claim to contradict the Qur'an and the *sunnah*, and to divert people from the religion of Allah and send them into disbelief.

How far is that from what charlatans do, those who claim to be *walis* of Allah and perform tricks such as magicians and idol worshippers do in public places and in front of the common people, whose tricks end with sticking themselves with skewers, playing with fire and charming snakes?

If what they have is truly *karaamah*, then let them show us the effects of this on the faces of the enemies of Islam who oppress the Muslims throughout the earth, from East to West or at least the Middle East problem!

If they know the unseen, then let them disclose to the Muslims what their enemies have in store for them. If they are able to play with fire then let them stand and confront the fire of these enemies.

But if they do not do that, in fact, they lean and scrape before the enemies of Islam. Then their works are not *karaamah,* but rather tricks and deceptions. Such perversions are only another reason behind the twisting of ordinary Muslims' understanding of their religion. They spread fables and fairy tales, and make people believe that righteous people have been given full authority to do what they want to do in the heavens or the earth.

(77) Ibn Kathir, *Al-bidaya wal-nihaya*, 6/267-9.

Bearing Witness that a Person is a *Wali*

We give our witness to those whom the Prophet ﷺ gave witness that they are *awlia*, such as the ten Companions who were given good news of Paradise, and those who swore allegiance before the Prophet ﷺ and the *Muhajarin* and the *Ansar*.

After that no one is permitted to speak about that of which he has no knowledge.

For Allah disallowed us to claim the pureness or to assert that so and so is a *wali* of Allah, since this is something that we cannot know. Allah has forbidden us from declaring the purity of our own souls. He says,

> "***So do not claim yourselves to be pure; He well knows who*** [in fact] ***fears Allah.***" (53:32)

We do not know more about ourselves than others do. So how could we claim the purity of others, and or say that so and so person has been given honor by Allah, and that he is one of His most sincere believers and a *wali* of Allah, and proceed to laud him and honor him?

If someone says, this man is a *wali* of Allah, then you ask him: "Are you saying that he is one of the People of Paradise?" If he says, "Yes," then he is a liar. If he says, "I do not know, but I hope he is one of the People of Paradise," tell him, "Then it is better to say, 'I hope he is a *wali*'. Then you must fear Allah and not say things about Allah that you know not. Allah has commanded you not to declare the purity of your own soul and so how can you declare the purity of another?"

The Prophet ﷺ once went to see Othman b. Mazh'un just after he had died. Um 'Ala al-Ansaria was saying to the dead, "I bear witness to you, Abu al-Sahib, that Allah will be honoring you."

The Prophet ﷺ said, "How do you know that Allah will show him His favor?" She said, "But, I don't know." He told her, "As for him, his Lord has brought him what surely must come, and I hope the best for him. Yet by Allah, I do not know what He will do with me nor with you, and even I am the Messenger of Allah." She said, "By Allah, I will never assert the purity of anyone after this."(78)

The Companions once saw a man fighting valiantly against the disbelievers and he slew many of them. The companions were pleased by his courage and praised him lavishly. The Prophet ﷺ told them, "Surely, he is one of the People of Hellfire." The Companions said, "How could we be among the People of Paradise if he is one of the People of Hell?" One of the Companions went to follow him, and found he had been wounded and was near death. He had placed the hilt of his sword against the ground with the point of it at the center of his chest. Then he fell upon it killing himself. This Companion then went back to the Prophet ﷺ and said, "I bear witness that you are the Messenger of Allah."

The Prophet ﷺ said, "What happened?" And the companion told him about the suicide. Then the Prophet ﷺ said, "A man may do the deeds of the People of Paradise as it is look to people while he is really one of the People of Hellfire, and another may

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(78) Al-Bukhari, 1243.

do the deeds of the People of Hellfire while he is really one of the People of Paradise, and verily, the (most considerable) deeds are the sealed (ones of deeds)."[79].

Another man died in battle and the Companions began congratulating him as a martyr. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Certainly not. By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, the booty which he has taken without giving others their share is flaming a blazing fire on him in his grave."[80]

As we have seen, the companions were confused and almost deceived by this matter of the two men whom the Prophet ﷺ said "They are in Hellfire", until they thought they were *wali* of Allah. Even though the companions were the most *wali* among people after Prophets. But they were human beings and had no knowledge of the unseen. It may happen that a man appears to be *wali* as it may accur to people's mind, while Allah sees his bad intention in his heart while people can only see the work and not the intention.

This is why the Prophet ﷺ said, "A man may do the deeds of the People of Paradise as it is looked to people while he is really one of the People of hellfire."

And when some people praised Abu Bakr, he said, "Oh Allah, do not blame me for what they say, and make me better than what they think about me, and forgive me for what they know not."

This is the Islamic way which many people today have swerved from. And many leaders of *bid'a* and of perversion in religion have taken advantage of the ignorance of people, till they gradually brought them into every *bid'a* and *shirk*.

They have led them to believe that the *wali* of Allah is someone with a white beard and a black cloak and a big rosary whose feet and hands people kiss and seek blessings by touching him, and who teaches them the ways of *bid'a*.

Allah has neither taken a foolish or ignorant person as "*wali*" to make him His friend, nor an innovator who adds innovations in Allah's religion. But His real a*walia (*friends) are those who commit themselves to follow His Book and the *sunnah* of His Messenger ﷺ.

And while Allah banishes those who compete with one another vainly, He will take for a *wali* anyone he pleases, perhaps a carpenter or a baker or whoever is deserving of such an honor. Unlike those to whom people bow down on their knees and kiss their hands and feet.

The Prophet ﷺ said, "May one be unkempt, dusty, driven away from doors, and no one cares for (whereas he is held in honor by His Lord), if he swears by Allah (to give him what he wants), Allah will fulfil his oath."[81]

([79]) Al-Bukhari, 6606.
([80]) Al-Bukhari, 6707.
([81]) Muslim, 2622.

By this, he meant that someone whom others value little and whom they drive from their homes with disdain may be a *wali* to Allah and beloved of Him. Even if he swears by Allah, Allah will answer him, as a favor to him.

This is because Allah's values and measures are different from how people measure people. Men may value a person by his wealth and ease, which may count for nothing with Allah.

The way Allah values things is different from people's way.

Importance, in people's eyes, is often a matter of how much money a person has, or of the color of his skin, or of the nation to which he belongs. But the importance before Allah is a matter of the belief that is in one's heart and the fear he holds for Allah. He says,

> "***The most honored one among you with Allah is he who is most Godfearing.***" (49:13)

The door to *wilaya* (friendship) of Allah is accessible and entry is granted for any one who seek it, it is not an exclusive club of the sheiks as the Sufi's believe, or of the Imams as the *shias* think. It is not the preserve of the saints, as the Christians would have it.

The evidence for this is to be found in this *hadith*. A man asked the Prophet ﷺ about what Allah had made obligatory upon him? The Prophet ﷺ replied, "You must fulfill [your obligation] to pray, and to pay *zakat*, and to perform the Pilgrimage to the House [of Allah] if you are able." Then the man said, "By Allah, I will do this. Nothing less and nothing more." The Prophet ﷺ said, "He will be successful (to enter Paradise) if he is true to his word."[(82)]

And surely no one will enter Paradise unless he is a *wali* of Allah!

([82]) Al-Bukhari, 6953.

The Most Excellent of Allah's Protected Friends

The most excellent of the *awlia* of Allah are the Prophets. And the most excellent of the prophets are the messengers. The most excellent of the messengers are five and the most excellent one of these was Muhammad ﷺ.

The most excellent of the *awlia* after the Prophets are the Companions of Muhammad ﷺ Abu Bakr, Omar, and Othman, and Ali, and then the ten who were given the good news of Paradise.

The most excellent of the *awlia* of this Nation are its scholars, for Allah does not take an ignorant person as a *wali*. A *wali* grows in knowledge, acts upon his knowledge, benefits people with it more and teaches them what is permitted and what is forbidden. Thus, al-Shafi'i said, "If the scholars [the knowledgeable] who act upon their knowledge are not *awlia* of Allah, then Allah has no *awlia*."(83)

Enmity and friendship may meet in a person

The *wilaya* (loyalty) to Allah increases and decreases as faith increases and decreases. Sometimes Allah's love for him increases and sometimes it decreases according to his good deeds or bad deeds, whether a person is obedient or disobedient.

The matter of *wilaya* is as the matter of faith. One whose *iman* (faith) is stronger and whose fear of Allah is more intense will be closer to Allah in terms of being His *wali.*

A *wali* of Allah may fall into sin or error despite his piety. This is not to say that he is no longer a *wali* of Allah, but Allah dislikes his disobedience, and He likes the remainder of his *wilayah.*

That is why you find that someone can have two different characteristics, such as Islam and (minor) *shirk*. People who have faith in their hearts can also have something of *shirk*, such as *riya'a.*(84). And in some hearts you will find faith and something of hypocrisy, or Islam and something of corruption and disorder. The mere existence of this in the heart does not mean that faith is gone.

(83) Siyar a'lam al-nobala, 10/53; al-Bayhaqi, *Manaqib al-Shafi'i*, 2/155.
(84) The kind of *shirk* that comes from doing good works so that others will see it and so on

BELIEF IN THE LAST DAY

Believing in the "Last Day" means, believing in the Day of Resurrection, when Allah will raise all His creations up alive out of their graves, and the fate of each of them will be decided and the result of this long journey through life will be determined.

They will all be presented to Allah the Almighty in order that the reward for their deeds in the world shall reach them, be it good, or be it evil.

This is the promise of truth which all the prophets had warned their people of, the Day when all faithful believers will receive their reward and when all the rejected faiths will receive their punishment.

Today, is the life of work, not of reward, but tomorrow is the day of reward not work.

The believer knows well that this world is not our eternal abode, rather it is a place of work and of trial. We are, no matter how long we are present in it; only passers-by in this fleeting world, on our way to success and happiness or on our way to failure and misery.

Belief in the Last Day has a deep effect on people's lives, for it gives us our strongest motive to be vigilant about the correctness of our actions and the sincerity of our intentions.

Thus, the Prophet ﷺ said, "Charity is proof."

That is to say, charity is the proof of one's faith, because when a person gives something, he loses a lifely benefit of the world, but the believer knows that Allah will multiply tomorrow the reward of his charity at the Day of Resurrection, and will give him many times over what he may seem to have lost.

If we were to draw a comparison between someone who believes in the Last Day and another who does not, we would find the first to be a person who is dedicated in doing good and who is careful to avoid what is forbidden, since doing forbidden things will harm his next life.

In contrast, while we would find the second one absorbed in his own desires. The first person finds strength in his belief in the Last Day, strength to go on and to persevere in the face of the hardships and tribulations of the world, hoping always to be rewarded for his patience and perseverance in Paradise.

The person who denies the Last Day will be impatient and easily upset, since this world to him is a Paradise when he gets what he wants, or a Hell when his desires are frustrated. His world is at once Paradise and Hell.

For this reason, effective belief in the Last Day is one of the greatest causes of psychological security, peacefulness, and self-confidence, and one of the greatest sources of patience before whatever hardships and trials a person may be faced with in this life.

The Qur'anic CONCERN FOR the Last Day

The concern of the Qur'an about the Last Day is evident from its treatment of the life of the world. A few verses will be enough to illustrate this point:

> " ***Whatever thing you have been given is but the joy of the worldly Life, but what Allah has is better and more lasting for those who have believed and rely upon their Lord.*** " (42:36)

> "***Every soul will taste death, and you will only be given your*** [full] ***reward compensation on the Day of Resurrection. So he who is drawn away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise has already attained successfulness. For the life of this world is nothing but an enjoyment of delusion***." (3:185)

> "***Say, 'The enjoyment of this world is little, but the Hereafter is better for him who fear, and you will not be wronged a bit.***" (4:77)

> " ***You want the commodities of this world, while Allah wants the Hereafter, and Allah is Almighty, Wise.***" (8:67)

> "***But you prefer the life of this world, While the Hereafter is better and more lasting***" (87:16).

> "***And they are happy with the worldly life, while the worldly life is nothing – compared with the Hereafter but little enjoyment.***" (13:26)

Allah has considered preoccupation with this world and heedlessness of the next world to be one of the greatest sources of error and reasons for descent to bestiality. Allah said,

> "***Those who prefer the worldly life of This World over than the Hereafter, and avert*** [people] ***from the way of Allah and wish to make it crooked, those are far astray.***" (14:3)

And He said,

> "***And leave those who take their religion as amusement and diversion, and whom the life of This Worldly life has deluded.***" (6:70)

And He said:

> " ***Those who do not expect the meeting with Us and are satisfied with the life of This world, and feel secure therein and who are heedless of Our signs.***" (10:7)

And He related the story of the believer from Pharaoh's people, saying,

> " ***O My people, this worldly life is only*** [temporary] ***enjoyment, and indeed the Hereafter that is the home of*** [permanent] ***settlement.***
> ***'Whoever does an evil deed will only be repaid by the like of it, but whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer, those will enter Paradise, where they'll be given provision without account.***" (40:39-40)

He has predicated belief in Allah upon it saying:

“***The mosques of Allah are only to be maintained by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and establish prayers, and give the poor-tax*** [*zakah*] ***and feared none but Allah.***” (9:18)

And He said,

“***If you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger if you*** [truly] ***believe in Allah and the Last Day.***” (4:59) and also:

“***That is an warning to him among you who believes in Allah and the Last Day*** (22:32),

And Allah quoted the prophet Shu-aib, who said to his people:

“***My people, worship Allah, and be hopeful for the Last Day.”*** (29:36)

Thus you can see that there is no subject discussed in the Qur’an that does not bring you to a mention of the Last Day. Despite this, most people are neglectful of the Last Day.

The Prophet’s concern for the Last Day

The Prophet ﷺ7 said, “Be in the world as if you are a stranger or a wayfarer.”[85] He gave a fantastic example of the difference between the two states saying, “The world compared to the hereafter is as one who dips his fingers into the sea and beholds let him see what his finger takes from it”[86]

The punishment of the hereafter is more severe and enduring and likewise, the reward of the hereafter is more excellent and enduring.

The Prophet ﷺ said, “One of the people of Hell who used to lead a life of ease and rejoice, will be brought forward on the Day of Resurrection, he will be given a small dip in the Fire of Hell only once, and then he will be asked, ‘Son of Adam, did you see any good in the world, did you happen by any comfort at all?’ He will say, ‘No, by Allah, none.’ And the one of the people of Paradise who used to live a most miserable life before will be brought and put in Paradise for a moment. He will be asked, ‘Oh son of Adam, did you see any misery in the world, did you happen by any hardship at all?’ and he will say, ‘No, by Allah, I came across no misery at all there and saw no hardship.”[87]

A single taste of Hell was enough to cause the disbeliever to forget all he had of enjoyment in the world and an instant dip in Paradise was enough to make the believer forget all the bitterness and hardship of his earthly life.

The Prophet ﷺ mentioned[88] that Allah would say to the disbeliever on the Day of Resurrection, “Do you see if you had the like of the world full of gold, would you ransom yourself with it today?” He will say “Yes.” Then Allah will say to him, “You have been asked what is easier than this, that you associate none with Me, and you will not go to Hell. But you refused but to commit *shirk*.”

Good deeds are the account of the believer by which he is redeemed. It will be the currency of the Day of Resurrection. Gold and silver will be of no use on that day. It is not surprising then to find those who believe in the Last Day competing to do good works.

They do not do this for the good of this fleeting world but rather hope to find salvation and success in the pleasure of their Lord and to earn their reward from Him in the hereafter. Because of this it has been said, “The world is the farm of the hereafter.” All the good deeds you plant in the world will bear their fruits in the hereafter.

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(85) Bukhari, 6146
(86) Muslim, 2858
(87) Muslim, 2808
(88) Muslim, 2805

Who are the bankrupt?

The worst kind of person is the broken or spendthrift, not the spendthrift who loses his money, but the real and worst spendthrift is he who squanders the good deeds he has gained in life, giving them away on the Day of Resurrection to those whom he had wronged, for the currency that people will have to deal with tomorrow to pay their debts is not dollars or pounds but good deeds or bad deeds?

The Prophet said, “Do you know who the spendthrift is?” The people around him said, “The spendthrift among us is the one who has no more money.” He said, “The spendthrift is the one who comes on the Day of Resurrection with good deeds as mountains, who comes with prayer, fasting and charities, but who comes while he had insulted this one, and slandered that one and cheated that one, and took the money of that one, and shed blood of that one, and beaten up that one, then this one will take some of his good deed, and that one takes from his good deeds until, when all of his good deeds are used up, even before he has paid everyone what he owes them.

So he takes upon himself their evil deeds. They will be given to him, and he will be thrown into Hell.”[89]

The Last Day is divided into:

- One personal day related to the Last Day a person lived in the world. This is the first stage of several through which the dead pass.
- A common day, which will be the final day on this earth, and this is the second stage.

([89]) Muslim, 2581

DEATH

As birth is the way one enters this world, so death is the way one enters the next. The Almighty has said,

"***Every soul will taste death. Then to Us you will be returned.***" (29:57)

And He said,

"***Wherever you be, death will overtake you, even if you are in high-built towers.***" (4:78)

When the time of death has come, it will not be possible to delay it even for an instant. Allah has said,

"***But never will Allah delay a soul when its time has come. And Allah is well aware with all what you do.***" (63:11)

The critical moments of death

At the very moment of death, angels come to the believer at the last moments of his life, and at the time of his most dire need of comfort and reassurance, angels of mercy descend upon him to give him glad tidings of the mercy of Allah, of His great reward and of Paradise.

An angel sits at his head and gently draws his soul out of his body saying, "Come out O reassured soul to the forgiveness of Allah and His pleasure."

Allah has said,

"***Those who say, 'Our Lord is Allah' and then stand straight*** [remain on a right course]***, the angels come down to them*** [saying] ***'Don't fear and do not grieve, but have the good news of Paradise, which you were promised which you were promised. We are your allies in the Life of This World and in the Hereafter, and you will have in it what your souls desire, and you will have in it whatever you ask for, as hospitality from*** [Him who is] ***One All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.***" (41:30-32)

Then instantly, the fear is vanished and replaced by happiness and gladness and longing to be brought before Allah, Glorious and Mighty.

Whoever desires to meet with Allah,

Allah desires to meet Him

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever loves to meet Allah, Allah loves to meet him. And Whoever hates to meet with Allah, then Allah hates to meet him" Aisha (Prophet's wife may Allah be pleased with her) said, "What, about hatred of death? All of us hate death." He said, "Not that. But when the believer is given glad tidings of the mercy of Allah and His pleasure, and of Paradise, he then loves to meet Allah, then Allah loves to meet him. And when the disbeliever is given glad tidings of Allah's punishment and His wrath, he hates the thought of meeting Allah, then Allah hates to meet him.

In another narration it says, "When the eyes glaze over, and the chest seizes up, and the skin begins to tingle, and the fingers become stiff, then whoever likes to meet Allah, Allah likes to meet him and whoever hates to meet Allah, Allah hates to meet him." [90]

Then the angels descend upon the disbeliever to give him tidings of Allah's anger and of the torment of Hell. An angel will sit at his head to extract his soul, and says "O evil soul, come out from the evil body."

He will pull it as hardly until it will tear out his nerves and roots, then the soul will come out as the most foul smelling thing in existence.

"***If you could but see, when the wrongdoers are in the overwhelming pangs of death while the angels extend their hands, saying, 'Discharge your souls. Today you are awarded the punishment of*** [extreme] ***humiliation for what you used to say against Allah other than the truth, and*** [that] ***you were toward His verses arrogant.'*** (6:93)

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[90] (Narrated by Bukhari 6508 & Muslim 2683).